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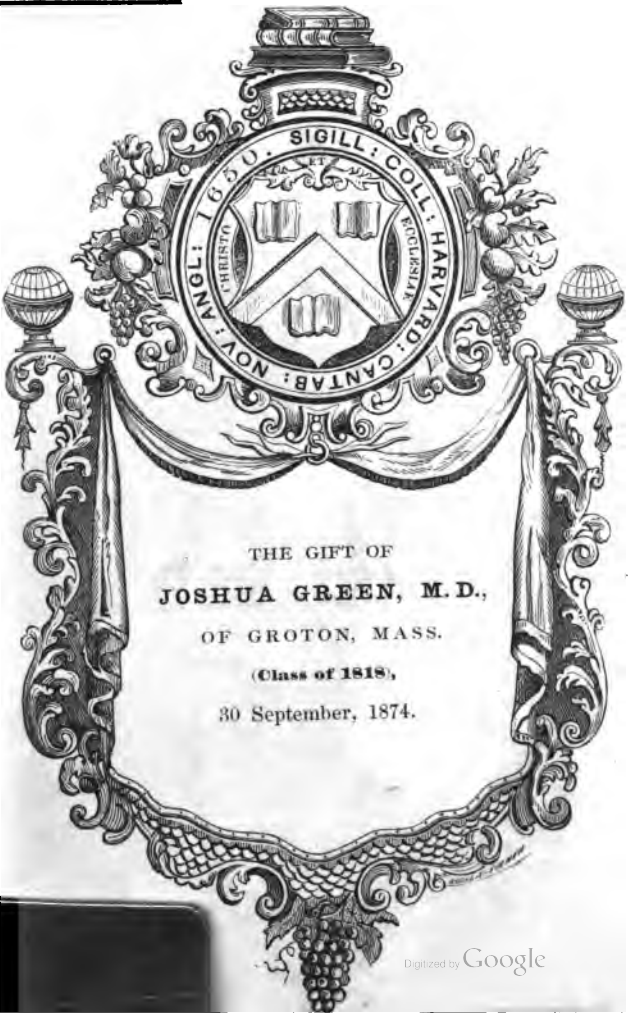

THE GIFT OF
JOSHUA GREEN, M.D.,
OF GROTON, MASS.
(Class of 1818),
30 September, 1874.

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MEMOIRS

OF

CELEBRATED

FEMALE SOVEREIGNS.

BY MRS. JAMESON,

AUTHORESS OF "THE DIARY OF AN ENNUYEE," &c.

"Nous sommes faites pour embellir le monde, plutôt que pour le commander."—MADAME ROLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

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IN THE SECOND VOLUME.

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CELEBRATED

FEMALE SOVEREIGNS.

CHRISTINA,

QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

Although the arts which she patronised threw a factitious and a temporary splendour round the character of Christina, it has proved too superficial and unfounded to dazzle or deceive posterity. The contemporaries of this queen appear at a loss what to say or think of a woman whose life "was one contradiction;" whose intellectual powers and exalted station procured her no respect; who gave away a throne from an excess of selfishness, and divested herself of power from a love of independence; whose passion for glory ended in abasement and self-degradation, and whose ambition stooped to a mean dependence upon those whom she despised. Had Christina moved in a private station, she had been merely regarded as a vain, clever, and very eccentric woman, and might have found many a parallel among her own sex; but being placed upon a throne, she appeared extraordinary, and even sometimes great;—and was certainly one of the most remarkable women who ever existed. She seems to have been endued by Nature with talents and dispositions which ought to have rendered her life happy, her reign glorious, and her memory illustrious; but ill-educated—at least ill-educated for the station for which she was destined—and destitute of virtue or common sense, her sex, her learning, and her splen-

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did situation only served to render her more conspicuously wretched, ridiculous, and pitiable. As a woman, she passed through life without loving or being loved; and as a queen she sank into the grave uncrowned, unhonoured, and unlamented.

Christina of Sweden was the only daughter of the celebrated Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, surnamed the "Lion of the North," from his conquests and military achievements: her mother was Maria-Eleonora of Brandenburgh, daughter of the Elector John Sigismond. It is asserted that Gustavus married this princess from political motives, and contrary to his own inclinations, being at that time deeply in love with a young Swedish girl named Christina, who afterward died. It is also said that it was from affection to her memory that he bestowed the name of Christina on his daughter and heiress. It is not, however, the less certain that Eleonora of Brandenburgh succeeded in gaining the entire affections of her husband. She is described by contemporary writers as a fair-complexioned and handsome woman, with a fine figure and soft, graceful manners; endued with a disposition for the tender and romantic, and some taste for the fine arts; but deficient in judgment, and weak in character, with all that paltry jealousy of power and turn for intrigue which is one of the signs of a little mind. She was passionately attached to her husband, who loved her for her beauty and gentleness, but took care to exclude her from all political influence, both during his life, and afterward by his last will.

Christina was born at Stockholm, December 18, 1626. Her parents, who ardently desired a son to inherit the throne, were considerably disappointed at her birth; her father, however, soon reconciled himself to the will of Providence, and caused the same rejoicings to be made as are usual at the birth of an heir-apparent. Not so her mother. The queen had listened to the assurances of some pretended astrolo-

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gers, who, after consulting the stars, had promised that she should be the mother of a son: and she was the more inconsolable because Christina, far from displaying any of the graces of her sex, was in her childhood singularly ugly. She appears to have treated her in early infancy with a degree of indifference which the young queen never forgot, and in after-times repaid by a neglect which shortened the life of her parent.*

Her father, however, loved her with a fond affection; and it is related that when she was attacked by a dangerous illness at a time when he was distant several hundred miles from the capital, he instantly set off to see her, and travelled night and day, without repose, till he reached Stockholm. Her restoration to health was celebrated by a solemn and public festival; and after this period she generally accompanied her father in all his journeys. On one occasion, when they entered the fortress of Calmar, the governor did not venture to salute the king with the usual discharge of artillery, fearing lest the thunder of the cannon should terrify the young princess into convulsions: she was then about two years old. Her father hesitated; but after a moment's silence, he exclaimed, "Fire!—she is a soldier's daughter, and must learn to bear it!" The child, far from being startled or discomposed by these warlike sounds, laughed and clapped her hands, and her father gloried in her intrepidity. He conceived thus early the idea of giving his daughter the education and sentiments which belong to the other sex; and it is certain that Christina so far forgot her *own*, as to regret, to the last moment of her life, that she

* "La reine, ma mere," says Christina, "qui avait toutes les foiblesses aussi bien que toutes les vertus de son sexe, ne pouvait me souffrir parcequ'elle disait que j'étais fille et laide,—et elle n'avait pas grand tort, car j'étais basanée comme un petit Maure. Mon père m'aimait fort, et je repondais aussi à son amitié d'une manière qui surpassait mon age. Il semblait que je connaissais les différences de leure merites et de leurs sentimens, et que je commençais de rendre justice par eux, dès le berceau."

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had never headed an army in the field of battle, nor seen the blood of men flow in mortal strife!

It would, perhaps, be too much to assert that she inherited these dispositions from her warlike father. Gustavus was regarded as the greatest general, and the greatest conqueror, of modern times, until the rise of Napoleon: but his pursuit of military glory had, at least, a higher and more generous motive. He took arms for the preservation of the Protestant faith in Germany, and to maintain the independence of the lesser states and princes of the empire against the overwhelming power of the house of Austria. Of all those monarchs whose fame rests chiefly upon their military prowess Gustavus appears to have been the most amiable and magnanimous, and his conduct the most pure from overweening pride and personal ambition. When, in 1632, he entered Saxony victorious and was received by the people as their saviour,—when they hailed him with acclamations of gratitude and admiration, a sad presentiment came over his mind, in which the chivalrous spirit of a royal hero mingled with that deep enthusiastic piety which distinguished some of the old Scottish Covenanters. On this occasion he appeared oppressed and shocked by the excess of the homage paid to him. "I am afraid," said he, "that God will punish me for the folly of this people. He who has called himself a jealous God will show them,—ay, and me too, that I am but a weak mortal man. Great God! bear witness that this is against my will! to thy providence I commit myself!"

Another of his speeches places him even in a more amiable light, and is worth recording, were it only to show what a hero and a conqueror thought of that glory which usually dazzles the multitude. The deputies of some German city appeared before him, to compliment him on his victories, and express their gratitude for his protection. They assured him, that but for him the Austrians would have founded

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a universal monarchy on the ruin of the peace and liberties of Europe; that God had raised him up to be the deliverer of Germany, and the guardian of his own country; and that his invincible courage was a special effect of the Divine goodness. "Say, rather," said Gustavus, interrupting him, "an effect of the Divine wrath. The war which we carry on as a remedy is the most insupportable of all earthly evils; worse than any of the evils it proposes to avert. Be assured that Providence never deviates from the usual course of things without chastising some one; and when He bestows on a monarch extraordinary talents or ambition, it is not as a favour, but a scourge and a punishment to the nations. A conqueror," he added, "is one who in his passion for glory deprives himself and his subjects of all repose. He rushes forward like a torrent, carrying desolation in his path, and filling the world with terror, misery, and confusion."*

Such was the father of Christina. She was not more than four years old when he was called upon to take the command of the confederated armies in Germany. The emperor Ferdinand II. had placed at the head of his forces two of his bravest generals, Count Tilly and the celebrated Wallenstein, and prepared to carry on the contest with vigour.

On leaving Stockholm for the theatre of war, Gustavus made the best possible arrangements for the government of his kingdom during his absence, and in case of his death. He caused the states-general and the army to acknowledge Christina as heiress to his throne; he named a council of regency to exercise the supreme power during her minority, and placed the famous Chancellor Oxenstiern at the head of affairs. In an assembly of the senate, he solemnly confided his daughter to their loyalty and

* The whole of this remarkable speech is given at length in Archenholtz.

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protection; and having thus disposed all things for the administration of his government, he prepared to set off for the seat of war, accompanied by the queen. The young princess, being brought to take leave of her father, began to recite a little speech she had been taught for the occasion; but, occupied by his own reflections, he turned away absently, without listening to her: the child immediately stopped short, and pulling him by the coat, called his attention to herself; the king snatched her up in his arms, and kissed her repeatedly, mingling tears with his caresses, and when at last he resigned her to her attendants, she wept so violently for several hours as to endanger her health. To these circumstances, natural enough in themselves, the populace attached a superstitious importance, when, two years afterward, Gustavus perished at the battle of Lutzen, in the prime of his life, and at the moment when all Europe rang with the fame of his successes. This celebrated battle was fought on the 16th of November, 1633; and though victory remained with the Swedes, they esteemed it dearly purchased by the death of a sovereign who possessed so many great and good qualities, and was among the least criminal and selfish of those monarchs who have sacrificed the welfare of their subjects to false ideas of glory.

The queen-mother returned to Sweden with the body of her husband, which she never quitted from the day of his death to that of his interment—a period of two years. His heart, which had been embalmed and enclosed in a casket of gold, decorated with jewels, was suspended to her bed, and every day "she wept over it with great lamentation, giving other tokens of extreme love and grief; which (her daughter remarks) were more easily excused than justified." After her return to Sweden, the senate and the clergy prevailed upon her to resign this precious casket, that it might be interred with the remains of the king; but with that fanciful turn of

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mind for which she was remarkable, she perpetuated, at least, the recollection of her sorrow, by instituting the order of the "Golden Heart," and distributing the badge (a heart-shaped medal) among the ladies and officers of her court.

Christina had been separated from her mother for nearly four years, and when they met for the first time after the death of Gustavus, she was about eight years old; the sight of her child, by recalling the image of a father whom she greatly resembled, brought back the feelings of nature to the mother's heart. "She caught me in her arms," says Christina, "half-drowned me in her tears, and had nearly smothered me in her embraces." She refused to part with her daughter, and kept her with her in her retirement for nearly two years; a proof of affection which the young queen could have dispensed with. "A force de m'aimer," says Christina, with her usual naïveté, "elle me fit désespérer." The deep mourning of the queen-mother and her attendants, the melancholy and monotonous life they led, did not, however, damp the spirit or chill the mind of Christina; she confesses that the weakness of her mother so far turned to her advantage, that her excessive impatience of the dulness and restraint around her attached her to her studies; and her aversion for the gloomy apartment in which the queen-dowager mourned in state made her employ many hours with her books and her preceptors, which under other circumstances had been spent in amusement.

The regency, from consideration for the feelings of the mother, left Christina for some time under her care: as she had been excluded from all share in the government, they thought some little amends were due to her: but, weak in judgment, and uncertain in temper, she appears to have been ill calculated to manage the high spirit and gifted mind of her daughter. She would sometimes indulge her to

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excess, or weep over her in an agony of fondness; at another time she would punish her for slight faults with capricious severity. Among the recollections of her childhood, Christina tells us that she had an extreme dislike to beer and wine, and that the queen-dowager would not suffer her to drink water; that she consequently suffered from excessive thirst for days together, and would sometimes steal the eau-de-rosée which stood on her mother's toilet; being detected in this very pardonable theft, her mother whipped her most severely, which had the effect of making her a confirmed water-drinker for the remainder of her life.

The number of fools and dwarfs which the queen-dowager kept about her person, according to the custom of the country, was another subject of disgust to her daughter; Christina, at a very early age, had sufficient sense and taste to abhor these courtly appendages as the remains of barbarism and ignorance. The women who surrounded her mother were not of a high grade in point of mind or accomplishments, and it is not surprising that a girl of so much spirit, vivacity, and talent, as Christina early displayed, should fly from such society. At this time, that is, from her eighth to her tenth year, she studied regularly six hours in the morning and six hours in the evening, every day, except Saturday and Sunday; her progress, therefore, in every department of knowledge was not so wonderful as her unwearied and voluntary application.

The members of the regency* managed the public affairs with consummate prudence. It was their first care to secure the succession of the throne to Christina; for though, by the constitution of Swe-

* These were,—1. Count Brahe, who was *drotset*, or grand judge of Sweden, and president of the senate; 2. The old Count de la Gardie, grand constable; 3. The Baron Charles Carlson, high admiral, and natural brother of the late king; 4. The grand chancellor Oxenstiern; 5. The high treasurer Gabriel Oxenstiern. They were all men of talent and probity, who had grown old in the service of the crown.

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den, the crown was not altogether elective, the sovereign was not legally in possession of the crown till the succession was approved by the general assembly of the states. A diet was summoned, therefore, soon after the death of Gustavus, with more than usual solemnity, and the president demanded of the four orders of the state—the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants, "whether they accepted the Princess Christina, the daughter of Gustavus, for their queen?" One of the deputies of the peasantry, whose name was Lars Larsson (or Laurence, the son of Laurence), here rose in his place, and asked, "Who is this daughter of Gustavus of whom you speak? we do not know her, we have never seen her;—set her before us!" The assembly at these words began to murmur among themselves, on which the president, or marshal of the diet, said, "I will present her to you if such is your will:" he then left the room, and returning with Christina in his arms, he placed her in the midst of them. Larsson, going up to her, examined the child for some moments, and then exclaimed, "Yes—it is herself—those are the very features, the eyes, and the brow of our dead father and king Gustavus. Let her be our queen!" At these words the whole assembly burst into acclamations, Christina was placed upon her father's throne, and the oaths of allegiance were taken with enthusiasm. Though too young to understand the nature of her situation, Christina was not too young to receive a strong impression of her own grandeur and power. She received the homage of her subjects with much infantine dignity and self-possession. "I still remember," she says, "how enchanted I was to see all these men at my feet, kissing my hand."*

* Vide La Vie de la Reine Christine, faite par elle-même, et dediée à Dieu.—It is to be regretted that this very curious and original fragment does not extend beyond a few pages. It is written in French, with a degree of force and naïveté which are perfectly characteristic, but without any pretension to elegance, and is printed in the supplementary volume

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Though she afterward became so impatient of the trammels of court etiquette, yet as a child she was extremely fond of playing the queen, and when brought forward on state occasions, she acted her part with wonderful discretion. She was not more than seven years old when the Muscovite ambassadors were introduced to her; their grotesque manners, long beards, and singular dresses had excited the ridicule and amazement of the whole court, and fears were entertained lest Christina, by some act of childish folly, should give offence, or disturb the solemnity of the occasion. When her preceptor and her chamberlain endeavoured to prepare her for the interview, and exhorted her not to be afraid, she only laughed in their faces, saying resolutely, "Why should I fear? tell me only what I am to do, and I will do it." Accordingly she ascended her throne, and not only received the ambassadors without the slightest discomposure, but replied to their speeches with a confidence and dignity which astonished the strangers, and delighted her own attendants.

Gustavus, before his departure, had appointed Axel Baner to be the governor of Christina, and John Mathias to be her preceptor: the first was a mere courtier; the latter was really a man of learning and virtue, whom Christina, in her after-life, never mentioned but with respect and affection. In the instructions which the king had left for the management of his daughter, he desired that she should be brought up with the modesty proper to her sex, but in every other respect should receive a masculine education. He was not aware that he required two things, which were, in fact, incompatible with each other; and that in surrounding his daughter almost exclusively with men, however learned and accomplished, and in cultivating only the sentiments and

of the "Mémoires" collected by Archenholtz. It will be quoted wherever it illustrates in a peculiar manner the character of Christina, and always in the original words

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the acquirements proper to the other sex, he was depraving her manners, if not her mind, and striking at the very foundation of the only feminine virtue on which he insisted. Christina early displayed an "antipathy," to use her own expressions, "to all that women do and say:" but she became an excellent classical scholar, a great admirer of the Greeks and Romans, and all the heroes and poets of antiquity, particularly of Homer and Alexander the Great. At the age of fourteen she read Thucydides in the original; she rode and hunted, and managed a horse and a gun to admiration:* she harangued her senate, and dictated to her ministers. Meantime the gentler graces and virtues of her own sex were neglected, and thus she forfeited all claim to the deference due to her as a woman, without having the strength, either of mind or body, which gives the dominion to man. She grew up self-willed, peremptory, arrogant, and impatient, to an inconceivable degree. Being early emancipated from the restraint and reserve in which females of every station are properly educated, she became, at length, quite incapable of submitting to any control whatever; the slightest opposition to her slightest caprice became insupportable; and not the less so, because the natural strength of her understanding allowed her to see and feel the full force of those obligations and duties which her wilful, impatient temper rendered burthensome and intolerable.

In the mean time her education proceeded under the guardianship of the five great officers of the crown, who honestly fulfilled their trust according to the intentions of the late king. When she was about nine years old, they judged it necessary to remove her from her mother, whose weakness of character and foreign prejudices had rendered her exceed-

* It is fair to add what Christina says of herself on this point. "Bien que j'aimasse la chasse, je n'étais pas cruelle, et je n'ai jamais tué un animal, sans en avoir senti une sensible compassion."

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ingly unpopular in Sweden; and she was placed under the immediate charge of her aunt, the Princess Catherine, wife of the prince-palatine. But the education of the young queen was considered of too much importance to be entirely intrusted to her or to any single person. Certain instructions were drawn up by the council of regency, and approved by the diet, which were to serve as guide to the Princess Catherine, Axel Baner, Horn, and Mathias, in the direction and management of the queen. This document, which is dated March 24th, 1635, insists chiefly on three principal points:—

First, That as her majesty, in virtue of her rank as sovereign, claims the obedience, the faithful service, and the entire and humble loyalty of her subjects, so she should be taught that these duties are reciprocal; she is to learn to love and esteem her people; to be gracious and affable in her deportment towards them; to consider their interest as inseparably her own; to speak well of her country; and to treat the senate and her guardians with particular respect.

Secondly, They desire that her majesty should be well instructed in the manners, customs, and laws of foreign countries; but that she should be carefully brought up to prefer, and to reverence, and in all respects observe constantly the manners, customs, and laws of Sweden; that those who surrounded her should be Swedes by birth; that a certain number of young ladies of rank should be educated with her, as attendants and companions; and that in selecting these from the first families, particular attention should be had to the characters of their parents, and the manner in which they had been previously educated, in order that the young queen might not be exposed to the contagion of bad example; and the same scrupulous care was to extend to the choice of the women who waited on her person.

Thirdly, they remarked, that as she was destined to rule a great kingdom, it was important that she

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should be instructed in the duties of a Christian sovereign; but the science of government being one which depended on time and experience, and was scarcely to be taught by book or by rule, or inculcated in childhood; therefore, they recommended that a foundation should be laid in the early study of the Scriptures, as the proper basis of all knowledge and all virtue. They also recommended a particular attention to history, as most necessary to a sovereign, and desired that she should be made a good accountant. They especially insisted that not only all pernicious books, but all trifling works and books of mere amusement, should be carefully kept from her perusal; and that she should not be suffered to imbibe any ideas either of religion or policy which should be contrary to the Lutheran faith and to the liberties of her people.

There was much good sense in these instructions, but nothing was more easy and obvious than to draw up a plan upon such general principles; the difficulty consisted in applying them in detail, and this difficulty was increased by the extraordinary character and endowments of the pupil. The Princess Catherine was a woman of sense and spirit, and the preceptor Mathias had learning and integrity; but had the one been a saint and the other a stoic, Christina apparently would have tried the patience of both. In fact, she never seems to have been submitted to any thing like discipline of the mind or the will; her extraordinary quickness rendered all acquirements easy to which she chose to apply, and her "*insurmountable*" aversion to all the employments and recreations of her sex was indulged and encouraged. Like Tasso's Clorinda,

> "Ai lavori d' Aracne, all'ago, ai fusi
> Inchinar non degnò la man superba."

Dancing seems to have been the only feminine accomplishment to which she applied.

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But, on the other hand, she was so indefatigable in her studies as to fatigue all her tutors; so inexhaustible in her spirits, so restless, that her women and attendants had no repose day or night.* Besides her usual lessons in history, philosophy, and the classics, she acquired the German, French, Italian, and Spanish languages, merely as an amusement, and without the assistance of any master. The people who surrounded her at this time appear to have been selected with as much impartiality and judgment as was consistent with all circumstances; but if we may trust her own account, Christina suffered the usual fate of princes,—that of being spoiled in her childhood by the deference paid to her rank, even by those who instructed her. She observes very cleverly, with a reference to herself, that "men flatter princes even in their cradles, and fear their memory as well as their power; they handle them timidly as they do young lions, who can only scratch now, but may hereafter tear and devour."

During the minority of Christina the foreign affairs of Sweden were conducted by the Chancellor Oxenstiern, a statesman celebrated for his loyalty and integrity not less than for his great political sagacity. Under his direction the war was carried on in Germany with various success. Field-marshal Horn, and Generals Baner, Torstenson, and Wrangel successively commanded the Swedes and their

* "Je souffrais le chaud et le froid sans aucune peine. Je marchais de longues traites à pied. Je courais à cheval sans me lasser jamais. Je faisais une vie si extraordinaire malgré tout le monde. On fit tout ce qu'on put pour m'en empêcher, mais il fallait avoir patience, et me laisser faire. J'aimais l'étude avec passion; mais je n'aimais pas moins la chasse, la course, le jeu. J'aimais les chevaux, les chiens; mais aucune divertissement de plaisir ne m'a jamais fait perdre un moment, ni de mes études, ni de mon devoir; et vous savez, Sbignecr, que je n'ai rien à me reprocher là-dessus par votre grace. Les femmes et les hommes qui étaient de garde auprès de moi, se désespéraient, car je les fatiguais furieusement; et je ne leur donnais du repos ni jour ni nuit; et quand mes femmes voulaient me détourner d'une si fatiguante manière de vivre, je me moquais d'elles, et je leur disais, 'Si vous avez sommeil, allez vous reposer; je n'ai que faire de vous.'"—*Christine*

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allies, and were opposed by Wallenstein, Count Tilly, Piccolomini, the Archduke Ferdinand, and other famous military leaders. This was the terrible war called in history "the thirty years' war;" during which the finest parts of Germany were desolated, social order almost annihilated, and the progress of the arts and general civilization greatly retarded. As to the amount of individual misery and crime, it is beyond all computation.

The domestic affairs of Sweden were meantime regulated by the council of regency, and under their administration the country flourished. To the prince-palatine, the uncle of Christina, had been intrusted the department of the finances; but the states were so jealous of his influence over his niece, and of the hopes he was known to entertain of marrying her to his only son, Charles Gustavus, that they deprived him of this important charge, and bestowed it upon Gabriel Oxenstiern, cousin of the chancellor.

The late king had expressly excluded his widow, the queen-dowager, from any share in the regency; and she was so highly offended at this arrangement, in which the ministers persisted, and so incensed at being deprived of all control over her daughter, that she secretly fled to Denmark, and thence to Brandenburgh, where she continued to reside till Christina was of age to take the government into her own hands.

In 1639, when Christina was in her fourteenth year, her aunt, the Princess Catherine, died, and it does not appear that she had any successor as principal governess to the young queen. Within two years afterward, Christina, by the advice of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, was admitted to preside in the senate. She was extremely assiduous in her attendance, gave her opinion on matters of consequence with equal propriety and decision, and appears to have entered upon the duties of her high station with all the real enthusiasm of a young and

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ardent mind. As she approached the age of womanhood, her council were anxious that she should choose a consort among the princes of Europe who contended for the honour of her hand. During the first few years of her reign, proposals, embassies, negotiations, remonstrances on this subject occupied her ministers, but to herself appear to have been more a source of momentary amusement or irritation than of serious thought. The young elector Frederick William of Brandenburgh had been already selected by her father as her future husband, and this alliance was popular among the people and the soldiery; but the Chancellor Oxenstiern and others of the ministry dreaded the interference of Germany in the affairs of Sweden, and the introduction of Germans into offices of trust and power; in other words, they feared for themselves and their own places; and this alliance was declined.

It is said that Oxenstiern had early entertained the ambitious design of marrying Christina to his favourite son, Count Eric Oxenstiern, and that this was the secret motive which induced him to throw such obstacles and difficulties into the negotiation with the house of Brandenburgh as prolonged the treaty for several years, and at length rendered it abortive.

The two sons of the King of Denmark were also suitors for her hand; but Sweden remembered too well the evils of Danish ascendency, and the tyranny from which the first Gustavus had delivered his country, to consent to see the two crowns again united. Don John of Austria and Philip IV. of Spain were excluded by the difference of religion, and many other considerations, and their pretensions were merely a subject of mirth to the young queen. The Emperor Ferdinand would gladly have made peace on condition of obtaining her hand for his son, the King of the Romans. He believed that the idea of becoming Empress of Germany would have flat-

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tered the haughty temper and ambitious spirit of Christina; and she was heard to acknowledge that the temptation was strong, but she would not further commit herself. Though such an alliance would have gratified her personal pride and her love of power, it would have been displeasing to her people, and would have reduced Sweden to the state of a province of the German empire. Ladislas, King of Poland, and his brother and successor, John Casimir, were not more successful. Her ministry had objections against most of these princes, Christina apparently to *all*. She had early conceived an aversion to marriage, and was resolved to preserve her personal freedom at all hazards, both as a woman and a queen.

In 1644, being then eighteen, she was declared of age, according to the laws of Sweden: the regency was dissolved, and she assumed the reins of government with all the ceremonies usual on such occasions.

We can hardly imagine a position more magnificent and interesting than that of Christina when she assumed the government of her kingdom; and the portrait which may be drawn of her at this period of her life presents a picture so different from that degradation of character and situation she afterward exhibited, that in justice to her,—in justice to human nature, we must dwell upon it for a moment.*

Sweden, which had been for several ages only an obscure corner of Europe, had gradually risen in the scale of nations, from the time that Gustavus Vasa, the great-grandfather of Christina, had delivered his country from the usurpation of the Danes. It had attained the highest degree of glory and importance by the military exploits and political influence of her father, the great Gustavus. After his death the

* The particulars which follow are taken from the various portraits of Christina, by Chanut, by Manniechied, and others, who knew her personally at this time.

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generals Baner, Wrangel, and Torstenson maintained the glory of the Swedish arms in Germany; and during the minority of his daughter, the wise and firm administration of the council of regency, and particularly of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, had maintained the internal tranquillity and prosperity of the kingdom. Under these auspicious circumstances Christina, who had been born to the throne, —cradled, as she says, amid laurels and trophies of victory,—assumed a sceptre which was hers by the double right of her hereditary claims and the free consent of the states-general. She was in the bloom of youth, full of health, vigour, and activity; the natural cheerfulness of her spirits had been preserved by constant exercise of body and mind; and although she was proud, passionate, and capricious, she was also gay, frank, and generous. She entertained at this time a lofty and even sublime idea of the high destiny to which she was called, and of the multiplied duties and tremendous responsibility it imposed on her. All her resolutions and intentions appear to have been right and just; and to put these intentions into practice she had youthful enthusiasm, surpassing talents, a strong constitution, and the prospect of a long life and reign before her. Though learned beyond most of her sex, the vanity of learning had not yet seized her, and literature was to her what it ought always to have been—an amusement, not a pursuit. She understood most of the languages of Europe; Latin, French, German, Italian, she wrote and spoke as fluently as her native tongue; her proficiency in Greek has already been mentioned. At this time she seems to have preferred the French language, and it was spoken almost habitually in her court. She would have no prime minister, and from the very commencement of her reign (dating it from the dissolution of the regency), she received and read all the despatches, dictated the replies to her secretaries, which she afterward looked over and

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corrected herself; and while the regal power had all the gloss of novelty, she certainly wore it with dignity and grace. Her indefatigable attention to the business of the state excited the astonishment of the foreign ministers and the admiration of her people; she constantly attended all the deliberations of her council, and by the force of her character and her resolute temper she exercised the most unbounded influence over the senate, who yielded to her more than they would have yielded to a monarch of their own sex. It is asserted that she was at this time more despotic than any Swedish sovereign from the time of Eric XIV. to the change of the constitution under Gustavus III.

In person she was not handsome; her figure was below the middle size, but well formed, with the exception of a slight deformity in one of her shoulders, caused by a fall in her infancy; it was, however, scarcely perceptible; and her deportment and all her movements were remarkable for dignity, ease, and freedom. Her features were rather large and striking in proportion to her figure, and her whole countenance, unless controlled for especial purposes, was singular for its mobility and vivacity. Her eyes were of a brilliant hazel, quick and penetrating; her nose aquiline, her mouth too wide,* and when at rest not agreeable in its expression; her smile, however, was bright and pleasing, and her teeth fine, though she took little care of them. She had a profusion of light brown hair, which she seldom combed;† and a man's fur cap or a knot of riband was in general her only coiffure, till later in life she exchanged these for a periwig. She was extremely negligent in her dress, and never allowed herself more than a quarter

* If we may trust to her portrait by Bourdon;—an admirer of hers calls it "modique et jolie."

† "Elle n'a nul soin de sa parure; on ne peigne ses cheveux qu'une fois par semaine. Quelquefois elle sera jusqu'à quinze jours sans se faire peigner."

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of an hour at her morning toilet. Except upon state occasions, her attire was very simple and uniform; it consisted of a suit of plain gray stuff or cloth, shorter than was usually worn, for the convenience of walking and riding, with a black scarf round her neck, and rarely a single ornament. She was temperate, and even abstemious in eating, apparently quite indifferent as to what was placed before her, and was never heard to praise or dispraise any dish at the table.

Notwithstanding her despotic temper, her general deportment was frank, good-humoured, and easy.* She affected in conversation a stoicism which she was far from carrying into practice. Her singularities had not at this time degenerated into that extreme of eccentricity and coarseness which she afterward exhibited. When inclined to play the queen, her countenance could assume an expression of exceeding haughtiness, and her eyes so much fire and vivacity, that General Wrangel, who had made all Germany tremble at his very name, was himself known to tremble (or perhaps *affect* to tremble) in her presence. Like our Elizabeth, she took pleasure in daunting with a look those who approached her; and her courtiers, who soon discovered her foible, knew well how to flatter her in this respect.

She had women about her, as part of her royal state, but seldom condescended to notice, far less converse with, any of them, and openly professed an unmeasured contempt for her own sex. Her only female favourite was the Countess Ebba Sparre, one of her maids of honour, who was a year or two younger than herself, and eminently beautiful and amiable. Christina used to call her "La belle comt-

* "Dans la conversation ordinaire, elle est si familiere qu'on ne la prendrait pas pour une grande dame, bien loin de la croire reine. Je lui ai souvent ouï dire, qu'elle vivait sans chagrin, et sans inquietude; et qu'elle ne connaissait rien au monde, d'assez grand, d'assez nuisible, ou d'assez rude pour pouvoir troubler la tranquillité de son esprit."—Chanut.

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esse," and by this title she was distinguished to the end of her life. Ebba Sparre never attempted to exercise the slightest influence over her royal mistress, and appears to have been of a gentle, unobtrusive disposition and blameless manners.

Among the men who surrounded Christina in the beginning of her reign, the first in rank was her cousin, Charles Gustavus, the prince-palatine. The most celebrated was the Chancellor Oxenstiern, esteemed at the time the greatest statesman in Europe —more than a match for Richelieu in abilities, and far his superior in wisdom and integrity. But the most distinguished by the queen's favour was the Count Magnus de la Gardie, whom she married to her cousin, the Princess Mary Euphrosyne, and loaded with honours. He was her grand-chamberlain, and afterward ambassador to France. M. Chanut, the French minister, a man of considerable ability, possessed much of her confidence; and Adler Salvius, whom she raised from an obscure station to be a senator and a noble, was high in her favour, and intrusted with her most secret negotiations.*

Her cousin Charles Gustavus had a high command in the army, where he studied the art of war under Torstenson and Wrangel; and when he visited the court was always treated by the queen with the honour due to his birth and rank. Although he was the heir-presumptive to the crown, and was much beloved by the military, she never indulged the slightest jealousy against him; and though he was a suitor for her hand, she kept him steadily at a distance, nor did he ever dare to presume on that partiality in his favour which the whole court had early detected.

* When the senate hesitated to admit Salvius as one of their number, on account of his plebeian origin, Christina replied, "When good advice and wise counsel are wanted, who looks for sixteen quarters? In your opinion, Salvius only requires to have been nobly born; and he may be well satisfied if you have no other reproach to make him;—the part requisite in all employments of state is not nobility, but capacity."

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Count Peter Brahé held at this time the office of drotset, or grand justiciary and first senator of Sweden (a dignity resembling that of our lord high chancellor). He was a man of great talents and integrity, and high in the confidence of the queen and the people.

This slight sketch will give some idea of Christina and her court during the first five or six years of her reign; nor can we wonder that the eyes of all Europe should have been fixed on this singular woman with interest, admiration, and astonishment. She was, in fact, the only sovereign of that time who was invested with any thing like personal greatness. Mazarin governed France during the minority of Louis XIV.; Olivarez governed Spain in the name of Philip IV.; Cromwell ruled England in his own name. The emperor was almost imbecile: Christina alone maintained the regal dignity in her own person. Her first actions, private and public, were wise and beneficent. She added to her fleet, and invited skilful shipwrights from Holland. She made some excellent regulations with regard to the commerce, taxes, and coin of her kingdom. In her minority she had founded the university of Abo, in Finland; she now endowed it richly, and established there a valuable library, which in a few years amounted to ten thousand volumes. She also added to the revenues and privileges of the university of Upsal, and founded an academy of literature at Stockholm.

The celebrated Hugo Grotius had been patronised by her father, Gustavus Adolphus, and during her minority had been taken into the service of Sweden, and appointed by Oxenstiern ambassador to France. He returned from his embassy in the first year of her reign, and she received him with all the distinction due to his uncommon merit. After he had rendered an account of the affairs intrusted to him, he entreated permission to resign his offices. To the

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queen he pleaded his broken health; and to Oxenstiern the deep disgust and weariness with which his long diplomatic career had inspired him. Christina gave him to understand how much his continuance in her service would gratify her; but as he persisted in his wish, she presented him with a gratuity of 12,000 crowns, and dismissed him with honour. Grotius died within a few months afterward,* and Christina wrote to his widow a feeling and elegant letter, purchased the whole of his library and MSS. for a large sum of money, and presented them to the university of Upsal. The fame of this well-timed munificence was quickly spread through Europe, at a period when the name of Hugo Grotius was most illustrious in politics and literature.

In the mean time the war with Denmark proceeded, and the Swedish troops had gained signal advantages under Torstenson. But notwithstanding Christina's hereditary predilection for war, her admiration of Condé, who was her hero *par excellence*, and her oft-repeated wish that she might one day head her own armies, she had sufficient sense to perceive that peace had become necessary to her kingdom, and that, in order to establish her authority at home, it was necessary to have tranquillity abroad. She intrusted to Oxenstiern the care of concluding a treaty with Denmark. It was signed in 1645, on terms so advantageous to Sweden and so satisfactory to Christina, that on the chancellor's return she presented him with a large estate, created him a count, and, on investing him with the title, pronounced his eulogium in the assembled senate, after the manner of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In the course of the same year, as Christina herself informs us, she was "seized with a sickness almost to death, through fatigue and application to business." Nor can we wonder at this, when we are

* In August, 1645.

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assured that for many months she never slept more than from three to five hours out of the twenty-four.

Christina was content to share with her chancellor Oxenstiern the merit of concluding the treaty with Denmark; it was not so with the grand general pacification of Europe, which put an end to the thirty years' war, and which is called in history the Peace of Westphalia. The ministers of the various European powers met at Munster, and afterward at Osnaburg, and the negotiations lasted more than six years. Christina was represented in this congress by John Oxenstiern, the son of the chancellor, and Adler Salvius; and her correspondence with these two ministers affords the strongest proof of her talents, her political sagacity, her impatience of temper, and her determination of purpose. Young as she was, and naturally frank and magnanimous, Christina seems thus early to have learned and adopted one paltry art of government,—that of sowing secret dissension among her ministers, in order to retain the principal power in her own hands. In this manner she opposed Salvius to Oxenstiern, whom she suspected of wilfully retarding the negotiations, as his father, the chancellor, was known to differ from her relative to the expediency of the peace. The reasons he opposed to this, her favourite object, were probably worthy of so great and profound a statesman, and, had the war continued, it might have added to the possessions of Sweden, and have placed her in a yet more commanding situation with regard to the rest of Europe. But a single defeat in a pitched battle must have lost her all the advantages hitherto gained: and Christina, who had heard of nothing but war since she was an infant, began to be weary of the sound. She was, perhaps, too precipitate in hurrying on the conclusion of the treaty; but a negotiation of six years would have wearied the patience of one far less impatient. Whatever might have been her motives, history cannot deny her the

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true glory, so becoming to her sex and to her age, of having contributed mainly to this great peace, which, after many delays and difficulties, and calling forth all the talent and diplomatic subtlety of the greatest statesmen in Europe, was at length signed in 1649.* At the time that England was convulsed by civil wars, and France distracted by factions as sanguinary as they were inglorious,—that Germany lay desolate, and Spain was humbled,—a young queen of three-and-twenty dictated from her little kingdom terms to all Europe, and, stretching forth her sceptre, commanded peace. There is another circumstance connected with this famous treaty which is worth remembering. The thirty years' war had been caused principally by the influence of a woman—an amiable and a conscientious woman† —who, could she have foreseen the consequences of her fatal advice,—could she have looked into futurity, and beheld the torrents of human blood poured forth like water,—the millions of lives sacrificed,—the burnings and massacres of Tilly and his fierce soldiery,—the desolation of her people,—the flames of her own palace‡ (that palace into which she had been led in triumph a beloved and honoured bride!) —and herself wandering a beggar from city to city, —she must have died with horror on the spot. Two women healed, or at least ended, the miseries of which she had been the unconscious but most fatal and wretched instrument. It is generally allowed that the peace of Westphalia had never been con-

* The congress of Westphalia was the greatest ever known in modern Europe, and the most important in its results, until the congress at Vienna in 1814.

† Elizabeth of Bohemia, eldest daughter of James I., who advised her husband Frederick, the elector-palatine, to accept the contested crown of Bohemia. This led to the war.

‡ The castle of Heidelberg, twice sacked during the thirty years' war. The library of MSS., then the richest in Europe except the Vatican, served Tilly's dragoons as litter for their horses,—a fate even more ignoble than that of the library of Alexandria, which was used as fuel for the public baths.

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cluded but for Christina of Sweden and Amelia, the Landgravine of Hesse, another extraordinary woman, at a period when female influence seemed openly to rule the destinies of Europe.*

The news of the ratification of the peace was brought to Stockholm on the 31st of October, 1648, and was celebrated by Christina with public rejoicings. She did not, however, easily forgive the Chancellor Oxenstiern for having contradicted her in this affair; and the whole of that powerful family, notwithstanding the eminent services they had rendered their country, were for some time treated with a coolness as capricious and ungrateful as it was undeserved.

Peace being concluded, the states-general entreated Christina to acquiesce in the wishes of her people, and secure the tranquillity of the country by giving them a king. They proposed as a proper object of her choice her cousin Charles Gustavus, a prince of great bravery and accomplishments, who had been born and educated in Sweden. His mother, the Princess Catherine, having been governess to Christina, had not neglected the opportunity thus afforded her of cultivating in the mind of her pupil a predilection for her son. He had been the playfellow of the young queen in her childhood, and she had then in sport promised to marry him, and was accustomed to call him her "little husband." He was the only one among her suitors for whom she seems to have entertained a real and personal regard. Prince Charles pressed his own suit gallantly, but, though favoured by her in every other respect, she never, from the time she was able to feel and reflect as a woman, committed herself by a single word on which

* The French historians claim part of the glory for the Queen-regent of France, Anne of Austria; but she was more an agent in the hands of her ministers, while the others were women whose talents and personal character exercised a direct and acknowledged power over the affairs of Europe.

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he could build a hope as a lover. When in 1647 the prince was appointed general-in-chief of the Swedish forces in Germany (an office which shows at once the high trust which Christina reposed in him, and the wish to remove him for a while from her presence), he had a parting interview with the queen, and took advantage of the moment to draw from her, if possible, some expression of tenderness. He reminded her of her childish preference, her infant promise to him; and he entreated her not to allow him to depart without knowing what hopes he might venture to entertain. The queen, in reply, desired him to rest no hopes whatever on the early preference she had confessed for him, nor on any promise made at a time when she could not properly be responsible for any engagement.* She insisted that every thing which had ever passed between them should be forgotten, or considered as null and void. At the same time, she intimated gently that she would declare her final intentions when she had completed her twenty-fifth year (she was now in her twenty-first), and had celebrated her coronation; and she promised him, that if then she did not marry *him*, she would not marry at all, and would take such measures as should secure his succession to the throne. To this Charles replied, in a very lover-like style, "that if she refused to accept him as a husband, he would reject the crown she offered him on any other terms." Christina gayly reproached him with being so "romanesque" in his ideas; but as he eagerly continued the same protestations, she stopped him, with something of her usual haughtiness, reminding him, that if he should even die before the period she had mentioned, it was sufficient honour for him that he had been thought worthy of pretend-

* The Count de la Gardie and her preceptor Matthias were both present during this singular conference; and Charles Gustavus left a memorandum of what passed in his own handwriting, which was copied by Pufendorf.

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ing to the hand of so great a queen; and with these words she dismissed him.

To the repeated remonstrances of the senate and clergy Christina replied in the same ambiguous manner; and to those of her courtiers and confidants (the French minister Chanut being among the number) who ventured to express their surprise at her conduct, she replied in terms which showed how deep-rooted was her disgust at the idea of giving herself a master, or even a partner in power. When they pressed upon her the expediency of marrying in order to ensure an heir to the crown, she answered, "Il pourrait aussi facilement naître de moi un Neron qu'un Auguste." Unreasonable as this conduct may seem, Christina in this one instance maintained her consistency; and there was something in her resolute frankness more honest and respectable than the continual trifling and absurd coquetry of Queen Elizabeth.

Christina kept her word with Prince Charles, and one of her first cares was to have him acknowledged by the states as her successor to the crown. The high sense of honour, the spirit, resolution, and dexterity with which she accomplished her purpose would have been admirable but for the usual mixture of impatience, selfishness, and arrogance which she displayed on the occasion. The senate, before they would consent to ratify the nomination, required absolutely some pledge relative to her marriage, which she as peremptorily refused. The Bishop Matthias, her old preceptor, ventured to hint that the constitution of the kingdom "*obliged* her to marry." It was like putting the spark to the gunpowder. "Who," she exclaimed, "who upon earth shall *oblige* me to do so, if I do it not of my own free will? Until you consent to my wishes in this matter, do not think to draw from me one word on the subject of marriage. I do not deny that I may one day marry; the good of my kingdom is a powerful

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motive; but I will not be bound, *nor heaven nor earth shall force my will!*"—"All Europe," said the bishop, "have for years regarded the prince as your majesty's destined husband. What will be said and thought when this extraordinary arrangement becomes public?" To which the queen replied, "What care I? When people are tired of talking about me and my affairs they will find some other subject of conversation." The council entreated time; she insisted that the affair should be settled immediately, still holding out some hope that she would subsequently yield to their wishes, and repeating frequently, that if ever she married she would give her hand to Prince Charles, "*foi d'honnête femme!*"—"I believe," said the Constable Torstenson, "that the prince will never marry at all unless accepted by your majesty."—"Yes," replied the queen, sarcastically, "*la couronne est une jolie fille!*" intimating, probably, a suspicion that the affections of the prince were fixed upon her crown, not upon herself. This idea, whether infused into her mind by Magnus de la Gardie, or a discovery for which she was indebted to her own quick and jealous penetration, had shocked her personal pride, without rendering her less anxious to secure the throne to Prince Charles. She had not only bound herself by a solemn promise to him, she also feared that the states would declare the crown elective in favour of some other candidate, and thus strike at the very foundation of the regal power. For these reasons, although her resolution was already formed, she eluded all expression of her real intentions, and, by a conduct at once resolute and artful, she at length carried her point. The act declaring Charles Crown-prince of Sweden (that is, heir-apparent to the throne) was agreed to by the diet, and signed in March, 1650.

When the deed of succession was brought to the Chancellor Oxenstiern for his signature, the old man wept, and protested against it; he regarded it as the

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preliminary step to Christina's ultimate purpose, of which his sagacity foresaw the consequences.

The conduct of Charles was throughout a masterpiece of policy: concealing a most aspiring and ambitious character under a calm and submissive exterior, he appeared merely to resign himself to the will of Christina, and conscious how far he still depended on her caprice, he was careful not to awaken that jealousy of power which she carried to a childish excess;* on giving up his military command he lived in retirement, never took the slightest interest in any affairs of the government, nor appeared at court unless expressly invited. By this discretion he maintained himself in the good graces of the queen, till it was no longer necessary to wear the mask; and the supposition that she afterward repented of her act in his favour, and wished to substitute Count Tott, though very consistent with her capricious character, seems to rest on no authority.†

The next event of importance was her coronation, which was celebrated at Stockholm with the utmost pomp and solemnity, on the 20th of October, 1650. On this occasion Christina's love of classical antiquity induced her to give her people the novel spectacle of a Roman triumph, as described in Plutarch. Crowned with laurels and sparkling with jewels, she paraded the streets of her capital seated in a car drawn by four white horses; her treasurer marched before, scattering medals among the populace, and the heralds proclaimed her, according to the custom of the country, KING of Sweden. The festivities continued for several days, during which shows were exhibited to the people, and masks, ballets, and banquets daily took place at court; there

* For instance, she would never permit any of her courtiers to accept of foreign orders of knighthood, saying, "Mes moutons ne doivent pas être marqués d'une main étrangere."

† Archenholtz.—It may have originated in the fact that Christina afterward wished the succession to be secured to Count Tott, in case Prince Charles died without heirs.

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were also reviews, mock fights, riding at the ring, and other military sports, at which the queen distributed the prizes; and Prince Charles and the young Landgrave of Hesse were particularly distinguished by their gallantry, the splendour of their habits, and the number and magnificence of their retinues. But that which caused the greatest delight and astonishment was a glittering triumphal chariot, which moved along the arena upon hidden springs; and in the same manner an artificial mountain forty feet in height, representing Mount Parnassus, was seen to glide self-impelled before the wondering spectators, while on its summit a company of musicians, habited as Apollo and the Muses, filled the air with harmony: orations in almost every known language were pronounced, celebrating the greatness, the virtues, the charms, and the learning of the queen; and a lofty pyramid, which, according to a pompous (and lying) classical inscription, was erected to the honour of Christina by Antiope, Penthesilea, and Thalestris, the three queens of the Amazons, was constructed as a memorial of these festivities.

The character of these exhibitions sufficiently indicates the taste which had for a long time prevailed in the court of Sweden; after the year 1648 we find Christina almost entirely devoted to study and literature, even to the exclusion of the duties and cares of government. She carried on a diligent correspondence with many of the most eminent literati of Europe; among others, with Gassendi, Menage, and Blaise Pascal, names still celebrated; she was surrounded by learned men, *soi-disant* philosophers, and professors in every branch of science, whom she attracted to her court by gifts, by pensions, or by promises, and whose interested and extravagant flattery completely bewildered a head already half-turned by vanity, unrestricted power, and indulged self-will. She collected manuscripts, books, and

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medals, and sent commissioners into Italy and other countries to purchase pictures, sculptures, and other rarities of art; these pursuits, in themselves praiseworthy, were carried to an excess which rendered them ridiculous and blameable. Not having herself the experience or taste to which she pretended, she was pillaged and cheated to an incredible extent; it is said, that at the instigation of one of the antiquarian pedants in her court, she offered 30,000 florins for a bronze medal of Otho; on another occasion, when some fine and valuable pictures arrived from Italy, this queen of the Goths had them cut down to a uniform size to fit certain panels in one of the royal apartments.

The style of learning and philosophy which prevailed in Christina's court seems to have been precisely that which Molière has so happily ridiculed in the "*femmes savantes*," and which is now out of date,—a mixture of scholastic pedantry and elaborate trifling.

On looking over the list of "savans" who were entertained in the Swedish court, we find few of any real merit or celebrity; there are two or three, however, who deserve to be more particularly noticed; of these, one of the most remarkable was De Saumaise, better known by his Latin appellation, Salmasius, as the political and literary antagonist of Milton: the erudition of this man was wonderful, almost, says Johnson, "exceeding all hope of human attainment;" and since the death of Grotius had left him without a rival, he had reigned, not only the monarch, but the tyrant of literature. He was a proof, were any proof wanted, that the true value of all human knowledge consists in its application; instead of being numbered among those "great and good men whose published labours have advanced the good of posterity," he has sunk into a mere name, which is only interesting as associated with that of Milton; while the one blot upon the pure and

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transcendent fame of the poet is connected with the name of Salmasius. Isaac Vossius, a very celebrated theologian, antiquarian, and critic of that time, was another whom Christina particularly distinguished. The private character of both these men was hateful, and they are supposed to have exercised a most mischievous influence on the mind of the young queen. It appears that they first unsettled her religious opinions, and blunted her moral feelings, by continually occupying her with idle metaphysical disputes, under pretence of studying philosophy.

Descartes, who had often declared that he valued his liberty at so high a rate that no monarch of Europe could buy it from him, was at length induced, by the flattering and earnest entreaties of Christina, to visit her capital. He fondly believed that he had ensured his independence, by stipulating that he should be exempted from all court ceremonial. The queen consented; but she required his attendance in her library every morning at five o'clock. The unhappy philosopher, whose health was extremely delicate, was obliged to comply with his despotic patroness. These early hours, and the extreme coldness of the climate, threw him into a consumptive disorder; his malady was increased by the haughtiness and negligence with which Christina resented his admiration of the Princess Palatine,* and at the end of four months he died at Stockholm.

The want of judgment which Christina displayed in the choice of some of her literary favourites, her capricious treatment of others,† the immense sums she lavished upon them, either to purchase or to reward their venal flattery,—their mutual hatred and envy,—their disputes, which often embroiled her

* The eldest daughter of Elizabeth of Bohemia.

† She made Naudé and Meibom, two famous Greek scholars, execute a Greek dance for her amusement; and Bochart, one of the gravest and most profound scholars of the time, play at battledore and shuttlecock. —Vide Bayle.

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court,—instead of introducing among the Swedes, who were a plain, rough, straight-forward people, any taste or reverence for literature, tended to degrade it in their eyes, dissipated the treasures of the state, and lowered Christina both in their estimation and their love.

It was in the year 1651 that Christina began to entertain seriously the idea of resigning her crown: the remonstrances of the senate and the arguments of Oxenstiern, who rose from a bed of sickness to combat her intention, induced her to lay it aside for the present; but her resolution was taken, and the contradiction she met with only served to confirm it.

In the same year an accident occurred which gave her an opportunity of displaying that intrepidity for which she was remarkable, though it had nearly terminated her life and reign together. One day, when she was preparing to visit her fleet in the harbour of Stockholm, and passing along a narrow plank laid from her barge to the vessel, the admiral, Herman Fleming, upon whose arm she leaned, slipped from his footing, and they were both precipitated into the water, which was there thirty feet deep. The queen was extricated with some difficulty by her equery, Antony Steinberg, for the admiral had seized her petticoat, and held it fast. Christina, without losing her presence of mind, desired them to save the admiral, who had sunk; and when those about her blamed him for his conduct in seizing her dress, and thus endangering her life, she excused him on the principle of self-preservation; and added, laughing, that he deserved praise rather than blame, for he had certainly been drowned had he acted otherwise. She afterward changed her dress with her usual celerity, and dined in public as if nothing had happened. This was not her only escape: the year before her coronation, as she was at prayers in her chapel, a wretched maniac forced his way through the guards and attendants, and attempted to strike at her with

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a knife, but was seized and disarmed by Count Brahe: the queen, immediately perceiving his real condition, would not allow him to be hurt, and he was placed under proper restraint.

The conduct of Christina during the next two or three years of her life exhibits a tissue of inexplicable extravagances; in most of her actions, private and political, we see such madness of self-will, such a total disregard to principle and consistency, that she can only be excused by the admission that her intellect was in some degree disordered. One of the most unaccountable of all her caprices was her partiality for a French physician named Michon Bourdelot, who had been introduced to her by M. de Saumaise, and, on his recommendation, entertained in her service. He was an ignorant, intriguing, impudent quack, who, by mere assurance, and the most superficial powers of pleasing,* obtained an extraordinary ascendency in her court and councils. This man persuaded her that study would injure her health; induced her to throw aside her books; to banish, or neglect, or insult with ridicule the learned men she had invited to her court; and led her into a thousand follies. All those who possessed or deserved the esteem and confidence of the queen he contrived either to render ridiculous, or to undermine by the most artful slanders. Among others, Count Magnus de la Gardie, who had so long held the post of chief favourite, and was at this time high-treasurer, and master of the royal household, began to lose his credit with the queen; and his own indiscretion aiding the machinations of his secret enemy, he became the object of a contempt and aversion as inexplicable, and apparently as unmerited, as his extreme favour had been before. It is

* Il savait chanter de petits airs, il jouait de la guitar; il s'entendait en toutes sortes de parfums. Il n'ignorait pas mener la cuisine; mais pour ce qui était de belles-lettres et de sciences solides, il n'en avait presque point de teinture.—Vide Mémoires de Christine.

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said that Bourdelot first taught the queen to swear, an accomplishment in which she afterward excelled.

The queen-dowager venturing to remonstrate against the power exercised by this unworthy foreigner, Christina replied with a degree of arrogance and harshness which silenced her mother, and she retained Bourdelot in her court till her ministers, her nobility, and even her people murmured so loudly, that she resolved to send him to France, loaded, however, with presents and marks of her favour, and with a hope of being soon recalled. But he was scarce out of sight when he was forgotten. The first letter she received from this *ci-devant* favourite she threw from her with disgust, exclaiming, "Fi! cela sent la rhubarbe!" Bourdelot, on his arrival in France, found himself completely neglected, and he died in obscurity. His influence lasted not more than a year and a half, and during that period a great part of the magnificent library which Christina had collected at such an immense cost was pillaged by her learned protégés, and the most valuable manuscripts stolen or dispersed.

On the disgrace of Magnus de la Gardie and the banishment of Bourdelot, the old Chancellor Oxenstiern and his sons regained their former influence at court; but the person who succeeded to all the favour and confidence which had been possessed by the Count Magnus, M. Chanut, and Bourdelot was Don Antonio Pimentelli, the Spanish ambassador, a man of the most consummate political address and the most insinuating manners. Through his intrigues the Spanish and Austrian interests triumphed over those of France, and he is supposed to have fixed the wavering opinions of the queen in favour of the Roman Catholic religion.

Although Christina resumed her literary pursuits after the departure of her "*agréable ignorant*," as she used to call Bourdelot, she became every day more disgusted with the duties of her situation, and the

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necessity of attending to a certain routine of affairs fatigued and irritated her, merely because it was an obligation; one of her secretaries appearing before her with some despatches which required her signature, she turned from him impatiently, and said to Prince Charles, who was present, "Will you never deliver me from these people? *ce sont pour moi le diable!*" She amused herself with inventing masks and ballets, in which she often sustained a principal part;* and she ennobled a great number of persons, whose merit did not always, as in the case of Salvius, justify the enormous abuse of this royal privilege.

In the mean time the affairs of her kingdom became more and more entangled; the revenues were exhausted, the crown-lands alienated by her profusion: there remained nothing more for her to bestow, and in case of a war no revenues to support it. Abuses and delays had crept into the administration, which she had not the patience, if she had the power, to remedy; she became moody and unequal in temper; she was at once jealous of her authority, and weary of the duties and restraints it imposed. She had dreamed over the classic poets till she fancied she could only be happy in a southern climate, and sighed for the ease and independence of a private station. Her lively imagination wanted some excitement, and the renunciation of a crown at the age of twenty-eight was the grand *coup de théatre* with which she now chose to dazzle and astonish all Europe.

In 1654, when she first openly declared her intention of abdicating the throne, the principal members of the senate, with Oxenstiern at their head, endeavoured to dissuade her from her purpose; but in vain. Prince Charles added his entreaties, and be-

* On one of these occasions, after performing in a pastoral the character of Amaranthe, she instituted the order of the Amaranthe; it included both sexes, and she bestowed it on the principal persons of her court and several of the foreign ambassadors.

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sought her to retain in her own possession the sceptre she intended to resign to him, or at least to allow him to share her throne as a husband, while the supreme power remained with herself; but she persisted in her resolution. On the 21st of May, 1654, in a solemn assemblage of the states-general at Upsal, she formally tendered her resignation of the crown, and in an eloquent speech, after recapitulating her own royal virtues, and all she had performed for the good of her people, she recommended her successor the hereditary Prince Charles to their loyalty and affection. After she had pronounced this harangue in a firm voice, the president of the senate arose, and in the name of the nobles entreated her to think better of her design, and to continue to reign over them. The Archbishop of Upsal remonstrated in the name of the clergy, and the president of the burghers made a speech to the same purpose. What followed cannot be better related than in the words of Whitelocke, who was then ambassador from Cromwell to the Swedish court, and was treated by Christina with great distinction. He was an eyewitness of the scene, which is thus related in his journal.

"In the last place stepped forth the marshal of the boors, a plain country fellow, in his clouted shoon, and all other habits answerable, as all the rest of the company were accoutred; this boor, without any congees or ceremonies at all, spake to her majesty, and his address was interpreted to Whitelocke to be after this phrase:—

"'O Lord God, madam, what do you mean to do? It humbles us to heare you speake of forsaking those who love you as well as we do: can you be better than you are? You are queen of all these countries, and if you leave this large kingdom, where will you get such another? If you should do it (as I hope you won't for all this), both you and we shall have cause, when it is too late, to be sorry

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for it; therefore my fellows and I pray you to think better on't, and keep your crown on your head, then you will keep your own honour and our peace, but if you lay it down, in my conscience, you will endanger all.

"'Continue in your gears, good madam, and be the fore-horse as long as you live, and we will help you the best we can to bear your burthen. Your father was an honest gentleman and a good king, and very shining in the world, and we obeyed him and loved him as long as he lived; and you are his own child, and have governed us very well, and we love you with all our hearts; and the prince is an honest gentleman, and when his time comes, we shall be ready to do our duties to him, as we do to you. But as long as you live we are unwilling to part with you; and therefore, I pray, madam, do not part with us.'

"When the boor had ended his speech he waddled up to the queen without any ceremony, took her by the hand, and shaked it heartily, and kist it two or three times; then turning his back to her, he pulled out of his pocket a foul handkerchief, and wiped the tears from his eyes, and in the same posture as he came up, he returned back to his place again."*

Whitelocke does not tell us whether Christina was touched by the homely eloquence of this honest peasant; but nothing could now alter her resolution. On the 6th of June following, she appeared in the hall of assembly, habited in her robes of state, the crown on her brow, and the sceptre in her hand. She took her seat on the throne for the last time, and Count Rosenhane read aloud the act by which she formally renounced the crown on the following conditions:—"That her cousin Prince Charles Gustavus should succeed her: that a revenue of

* Whitelocke's Journal, vol. ii. p. 108.

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240,000 rix-dollars should be secured to her, arising from certain lands and estates, of which she was to have the entire disposal for life, but was not to alienate them from the crown of Sweden: that she should continue to exercise all the rights of sovereignty and jurisdiction over her own household, acknowledging no human control over her actions, and have full liberty to fix her residence in any country of Europe." On these conditions which were solemnly ratified by the senate and by her successor, Christina released her subjects from their oath of allegiance, and laid down the ensigns of royalty. It was remarked that none of her attendants would lift the crown from her head; she was obliged to take it off herself, and deliver it to Prince Charles, who received it kneeling, and would never wear it in her presence.* The spectators and attendants who stood round her seized the royal mantle as she threw it off, and tore it into a thousand pieces, each anxious to obtain a fragment as a relic of their queen, who was about to quit them for ever. On the same day Charles Gustavus was proclaimed King of Sweden, by the title of Charles X.; and Christina, in a few hours after the ceremony, left Upsal and returned to Stockholm. She did not, however, remain long there; under pretence that the waters of Spa had been ordered for her health, she began her journey southwards.

It was not without reason that she hastened to quit her own kingdom after the step she had taken. The good people of Sweden could not well understand their queen's predilection for philosophy; they were so unrefined as to see in her renunciation of her hereditary throne only the abandonment of great and solemn duties; and in her preference of

* Charles flattered Christina's well-known foible by ordering a medal to be struck, in which he was represented on his knees, receiving the crown from the hands of the queen, with the inscription, "I hold it from God and from Christina."

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foreigners, foreign countries, foreign manners, an insult to themselves—a want of feeling as well as a want of patriotism. The idea that she was conveying out of the kingdom immense property, purchased with the gold which had been wrung from the necessities of the people, completed their disgust and indignation; and it is certain that there were serious intentions of arresting her before she quitted the kingdom, and forcing her either to resume her crown, or to reside in her own country, or to give up the pension and the royal treasures she was carrying away.*

Christina herself was aware of her unpopularity, and so fearful of being detained, that she took a route different from that which she had at first intended, and would not accept the escort of armed vessels with which Charles wished to have conveyed her in honour, if not in triumph, from the shores of Sweden; her journey, in fact, resembled a flight. As long as she remained within the boundaries of her former kingdom she appears to have been in terror from the threats of the lower orders of the people, and was careful not to shock public opinion, lest she should be delayed, and her plan of independence retarded or prevented; but on reaching Collen, near the frontiers, she threw off all restraint.—Quitting her female attire, she assumed the dress and deportment of a man, sent away all her women, and retained in her service only four gentlemen of her suite, with a few inferior servants.† She generally travelled on horseback, under a feigned name, and passed the frontiers of her kingdom, not only without regret, but with a childish ecstasy, wishing

* She conveyed out of the kingdom more than one hundred bales of property, consisting of jewels, gold and silver plate, statues, pictures, books, and articles of value, to the amount of some millions of crowns.

† Her attendants were Count Dohna, her chamberlain, Count Steinberg, her equery, Baron Soop, and another: not one of these knew whither they were going.

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she might never return to it, and glorying in her dear-bought freedom.

It is worthy of remark, that during the extraordinary scenes which attended and followed her abdication and departure, Christina never betrayed the least sign of emotion, hesitation, or repentance. She "played out the play" most unshrinkingly, but was in too great a hurry to be dignified;—too impatient—too intent upon her selfish purpose to show any thing like feeling for others. It does not appear that, individually, any one regretted her, or that she regretted any one. She shed no tears on parting with Ebba Sparre, whom she loved as well as she could love any thing, but who did not return her attachment, and seems to have felt her departure a relief.* The only two persons who really grieved over her abdication were her mother and the old Chancellor Oxenstiern. From her mother, who was sick with grief, mortification, disappointment, and incessant weeping, she parted without a tear: the old chancellor, on pretence of illness, shut himself up, and refused to officiate at any of the ceremonies attending the coronation of the new king.

The subsequent life of this extraordinary woman proves that the education which had rendered her bold, restless, and self-willed, while it inculcated no principle of duty, as little fitted her to play the part of an individual as to discharge the office of a sovereign.

Christina arrived at Hamburg on the 10th of July, and took up her residence at the house of her banker, the rich Jew Texiera. By this time reports had reached her former capital that she was going about in man's attire, and entertained thoughts of changing her religion; the people were scandalized, and the senate would have withdrawn her revenues

* Ebba Sparre was at this time the wife of Count Jacob de la Gardie, and the mother of two children. She died in 1662.

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if Charles had not interfered. From Hamburg she continued her route towards the Netherlands, and the first place at which she made any considerable stay was Antwerp. There her favourite hero, the Prince de Condé, for whom she had always professed a most romantic and enthusiastic admiration, wished to be introduced to her; but Christina, though uncrowned, demurred on some points of court etiquette, and when they did meet it was with mutual coldness and constraint.*

On the day succeeding her public entry into Brussels, Christina executed a purpose which she had for some time meditated: she forsook the Lutheran faith, in which she had been educated,—the faith for which her illustrious father had fought and bled,—

* Elizabeth, the ex-queen of Bohemia, and Christina of Sweden, met at Antwerp. There were several subjects of personal pique between these two queens, which prevented them from judging each other favourably; and Christina's open admiration for Cromwell was a political offence hardly to be forgiven by the sister of Charles I. In the correspondence of the Queen of Bohemia there are some allusions to Christina which are rather characteristic and amusing.

"I saw the Queen of Sweden at the play; she is extravagant in her fashion and apparel; but she has a good, well-favoured face, and a mild countenance."

"The French ambassador believes the treaty with Cromwell as good as broken; he is much joyed that the meeting between the Queen of Sweden and the Prince of Condé was to neither of their content, for he desired to be received as the queen received the archduke; which she refused, saying she had done too much in that, and would do so no more; yet he came to see her *brusquement à l'improvist*, and did nothing but *railler* her in his talk; which put her so out, as she said almost not one word. This was the morning; after dinner she sent to know if he would see the play at night; he said he would obey her, but desired to know whether he should come known or as unknown; for if he came as *Prince of Condé*, he looked to have a *chaise-a-bras*, as the archduke had. She said, he had better come unknown; so he came; and she stood all the play railing with *Monsieur Quito*, the prince's favourite. The next day, the prince went to Brussels, and neither of them well satisfied with the other."

"The Queen of Sweden is now at Brussels, where she was received in great state. I believe the archduke wishes her at Antwerp, for she persecutes him very close with her company, and you know he is a very modest man."

"As for the archduke, he may thank God to be rid of the Queen of Sweden, who is lodged at the Count of Egmont's house, in Brussels, where she stays all the winter."—See letters from the Queen of Bohemia to Secretary Nicholas, in Evelyn's correspondence.

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and professed herself a convert to the Romish church. She made her private recantation in presence of the Archduke Leopold, the ambassador Pimentelli, the Count Montecuculi, and others.

There is every reason to believe, from the character and subsequent conduct of Christina, that this change of religion was rather the result of policy than of conviction. She had resolved upon fixing her residence in Italy, and wished to avoid the inconveniences and the constant jealousy to which an open profession of the Protestant faith would have exposed her in a Roman Catholic country. It was, however, the interest of the priests around her to represent her as a kind of martyr,—one who had sacrificed her crown for the sake of religion: whereas it was very well known that her profession of the Roman Catholic faith was not the motive of her abdication, but rather its result. Bourdelot and Saumaise, by unsettling her religious opinions, had prepared the way for indifference and skepticism; and then her conversion, as a matter of expediency, was not difficult. The pope, Alexander VII., who had lately ascended the papal chair, felt all the importance of such an illustrious proselyte, and ordered public thanksgivings at Rome. At Brussels, although her recantation was private, it was celebrated in the most ostentatious manner by balls, masquerades, hunting-parties, and other amusements; and yet further to honour so great, so *solemn* an occasion, Cardinal Mazarin sent from Paris a company of famous comedians, who entertained the court of Brussels with operas and plays, alternately in French and Italian. As these far surpassed any thing Christina had seen in her own country, they seem to have given her particular pleasure. The perfect levity and indifference of her own deportment was quite consistent with the whole of this extraordinary exhibition, of which it is difficult to say whether it was most ridiculous or most

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shocking. "S'il y a un Dieu, je serai bien attrapée," said she, after receiving absolution at the feet of Father Guemes the Dominican.*

The festivities at Brussels were interrupted by the news of her mother's death. The queen-dowager, unable to endure with fortitude her daughter's abdication, and cut to the heart by the indifference with which she had parted from her, had refused all comfort; she fell into a languishing distemper, of which she expired in March, 1655. The same cause had shortened the life of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, who died a few weeks before her; he expired with the name of Christina on his lips: "Tell her," said he, "that she will repent of what she has done." Christina, though she sincerely regretted the chancellor, received the message with a smile—for the hour of repentance had not yet arrived.

We may form some idea of the little impression which Christina left behind her in Sweden, when we find that in the space of nine or ten months after her departure, Count Brahe was the only person from whom she received the slightest token of remem-

* Of the scandalous indifference, the shallow levity with which Christina exchanged one profession of faith for another, we have a proof in the postscript of one of her letters to the Countess Ebba Sparré, written from Brussels about this time. It concludes with these words:—"Adieu, belle, souvenez-vous de votre Christine. Je vous supplie de faire mes amitiés à tous ceux qui sont de mes amis et amies, et mêmes à tous ceux qui n'ont pas envie de l'être; je leur pardonne de tout mon cœur, aussi bien que je ne m'en trouve pas pire pour cela. J'oubliais de vous dire que je me porte parfaitement bien, que je recois ici mille honneurs, et que je suis bien avec tout le monde, excepté le Prince de Condé, que je ne vois jamais qu'à la comedie et au cours. Mes occupations sont de bien manger, de bien dormir, étudier un peu, causer, rire, et voir les comédies Françoises, Italiennes, et Espagnoles, et à passer le temps agréablement. Enfin, je n'écoute plus des sermons, je méprise tous les orateurs, après ce que dit Salomon, tout le reste n'est que sottise, car chacun doit vivre content en mangeant, buvant, et chantant." In much the same spirit, when the Archduke Leopold inquired what confessor or chaplain she had brought in her train, she replied, negligently, that in travelling from Sweden she had got rid of all useless lumber. This was the proselyte whom the Jesuits talked of *canonizing!* "Your majesty shall hereafter be placed among the saints!" exclaimed a Jesuit, who was preaching before her.—"J'aime mieux qu'on me mette entre les sages!" said Christina, with one of her sarcastic smiles.

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brance. When, however, the news of her conversion was brought to Stockholm, the people seemed to feel that the national honour was wounded by her apostacy. Their indignation fell upon Mathias, the first preceptor of the queen, whom they accused of not having sufficiently guarded her mind against the entrance of error; and, notwithstanding his eloquent defence, he was disgraced and deprived of his bishoprick. Many members of the senate did not scruple to assert that she ought to be deprived of the revenues which had been granted to her; so that Christina began to feel already by how uncertain a tenure she held the very means of subsistence. She wrote to her cousin King Charles, appealing to his gratitude, and recommending her interests to his protection. But no care or thought of the future appears at this time to have disturbed her gayety. During her stay at Brussels she lived with royal magnificence, lavishing immense sums in gifts to priests, poets, courtiers, comedians, and parasites, until the ready money she had brought from Sweden was nearly exhausted. She then turned her thoughts towards Italy. She had received the most pressing invitations from the pope to take up her residence in his capital; and at length, on the 22d of September, 1655, she quitted Brussels to proceed to Rome. Her suite consisted of about two hundred persons, principally Austrians and Spaniards; there were also four Swedish gentlemen of quality, and two ladies of honour; the latter more for show than use, as the queen neither noticed them nor required their services.

At Frankfort Charles the Second and his brother, then exiles from England, visited her incognito: she refused to receive them openly lest she should give umbrage to Cromwell. From Frankfort she proceeded to Augsburg, where, on being shown the table at which her father had dined after the battle which made him master of all Bavaria, she burst into tears.

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At Inspruck she repeated more publicly her abjuration of the Protestant faith, and was solemnly received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic faith. Several of the archdukes and others of the imperial family, and a great number of the German nobility, had assembled at Inspruck on this occasion. Here, as at Brussels, her conversion was solemnized by banquets, balls, illuminations, and comedies; and such was the pomp and magnificence with which she was surrounded, that Christina, a queen and a *philosopheress*, was dazzled and turned giddy. She was heard to repeat, with evident and childish pleasure, "*O, che bella! bella!*" Meantime her own deportment was not more decorous than formerly. On the evening of the same day on which she had made a solemn profession of faith in the cathedral at Inspruck, she was taken to a comedy prepared for her amusement: "'Tis but fair," said she to those around her, "that you should treat me to comedy, after I have treated you to a farce."

After a stay of eight days at Inspruck, she continued her journey, being everywhere received with the honours due to rank, and gazed on with wonder and curiosity. On the 19th of December, 1655, she made her public entry into Rome, mounted on a white horse *à la cavalière*, and surrounded by all the principal nobility and clergy: she was conducted amid incessant discharges of artillery, and with every mark of honour and of triumph, to St. Peter's, where she was received and confirmed by the pope, and had the honour of kissing his slipper. We are told that the Roman ladies were extremely astonished at the masculine attitude and dress of Christina, who entered Rome, not as a convert and a penitent, but rather as a victorious empress, triumphing as the conquerors of old; but on being told that she had made war on the King of Denmark, they thought her amazonian appearance perfectly natural. When the festivities with which her first arrival was

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celebrated left her at leisure, Christina took up her residence in the Palazzo Farnese, and spent some months in visiting the curiosities and antiquities of Rome, and in receiving the compliments of the learned men and the various academies.

It appears, that after the first sensations of excitement and interest were over, the Romans began to view their new visiter and proselyte with more wonder than approbation. Her extreme levity—not exactly of conduct, but of language and of manner—scandalized the people; and the haughty indifference, and even contempt, with which she treated the nobles and the women of the highest rank, gave great offence. Her tranquillity and her independence were daily troubled by the dissensions of her household and the want of money. Her revenue from Sweden was not punctually paid; and instead of the learned leisure, the pleasures, and amusements in which she had expected to indulge, she found herself beset by vexation and difficulties, such as she had never anticipated, and which her proud, careless spirit was ill calculated to endure. She wrote from Rome to Ebba Sparre, and although she would not confess her mortification and disappointment, the melancholy tone of her letter forms a striking contrast with that which she had written from Brussels but a few months before. Soon afterward, she was seized with a dangerous disorder, from which she recovered with difficulty.

In August, 1656, on pretence of escaping from the malaria, she left Rome, and proceeded to Paris, whither she had been invited by the French court: to defray the expenses of this journey she was under the necessity of pawning her jewels for 12,000 ducats, so low was she reduced in purse and credit. The King of France sent the Duke of Guise to receive her, and commanded that everywhere the same honours should be paid as to a crowned head; so that her progress through the French provinces,

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from Marseilles to Paris, resembled a triumphal procession, rather than a journey.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who met her at Fontainebleau, has left us, in her entertaining, gossiping memoirs, an account of her interview, and of the person, dress, and manners of Christina, at this time: she was now in her thirtieth year. "I had heard," says Mademoiselle, "so much of her *bizarreries*, that I was afraid lest, on seeing her for the first time, I should have laughed in her face; but though she astonished me beyond measure, it was not in a manner to provoke a smile. She was of a small, slight figure, a little deformed, with light eyes, an aquiline nose, a large mouth, fine teeth, and a very expressive countenance: her dress was a short gray petticoat, laced with gold and silver; a flame-coloured doublet, also laced with gold; a lace cravat, and a black hat, with a plume of feathers." Her manners were coarse and masculine; she swore commonly, laughed loud, astonished Mademoiselle de Montpensier by throwing her legs over the arm of her chair, and was sometimes seized with strange fits of absence, from which she would recover as from a dream. While they were looking at some fireworks, one or two of the rockets fell near them. The princess started and shrunk back; on which Christina laughed without ceremony, saying, that for her part she knew not what fear was; and that there was nothing she so much longed for as to be present at a battle; that she should not die content unless this wish was gratified. She professed an unbounded contempt for her own sex; and her conversation, though full of vivacity, was so eccentric and audacious, that it put even men out of countenance. On the 8th of September she made her public entry into Paris; she was received on this occasion with all the honours due to her as a sovereign, and all the chivalrous gallantry which was then the fashion in the French court, and was supposed to be

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due to her, as a queen and a woman. She was preceded by a body of a thousand cavalry, and was herself mounted on a superb white charger, in her usual masculine attire, and with pistols at her saddle-bow: by her side rode the Duc de Guise; and fifty picked men of the royal body-guard, and fifty of the king's pages were in attendance on her person. There was also an immense number of the nobility mounted or in carriages; while an innumerable multitude of people, collected together by their own curiosity, as well as by the king's proclamation, rent the air with shouts, and regarded her extraordinary appearance and amazonian dress and deportment with an astonishment not unmingled with admiration. Christina, who, with all her philosophy, appears to have been childishly susceptible to excitement, looked round her with extreme self-complacency. It was the last time that she was destined to wear her regal honours publicly. At the gate of Paris she was met by the Mareschal d'Hôpital, who conducted her first to the church of Notre Dame, where a solemn *Te Deum* was performed; thence to the Louvre, where she was lodged and entertained with truly royal magnificence. The same day she was visited by Henrietta Maria of England, the nobility, the principal clergy, and a deputation from the French academy. After remaining at Paris three days, during which time she was absolutely besieged by addresses, visits, public speeches, and honours and flatteries in every form, she set off for Compeigne, where the court then resided. On the road she dined and slept at Chantilly, where she was met by Cardinal Mazarin. Here the young king and his brother mingled incognito with the crowd who surrounded her, and were introduced by the cardinal as two gentlemen of rank: but the penetration of Christina was not at fault; she immediately recognised them, and addressed the king as "*Mon frère*," but without otherwise designating his

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quality. It is remarked, as an instance of her singular power of fascinating those whom she wished to please, that Louis, who was only nineteen, at that time timid in all female society, and as shy as excessive pride and a consciousness of his own neglected education could make him, was won by this philosophical amazon. She placed him at his ease by the frankness of her own manner, and by some well-timed compliments; and from the first moment, they conversed together with mutual pleasure. After this interview, the king galloped back to Compeigne.*

The next day Christina proceeded on her journey, accompanied by Cardinal Mazarin, and a few leagues from Compeigne was met by the queen-mother, Anne of Austria; the king, the princes, and the chief persons of the royal household. The interview took place at the house of the Mareschal de la Motte-Houdancourt. Christina was attended by the Duc de Guise and the celebrated Duc de Rochefoucauld. She had no suite, except two or three persons, hardly above the rank of menial servants. "Herself alone," says Madame de Motteville, "composed her whole court." The same lady, who was an eyewitness of this interview, which she describes in her memoirs with many picturesque circumstances, confesses, that at the first glance the Queen of Sweden not only surprised, but almost terrified her. In truth, we can easily imagine that Christina, with her various eccentricities of dress and manner, and her total disregard to decorum, must have appeared in the eyes of a lady of the bedchamber in a magnificent and ceremonious court as nothing less than portentous. On this occasion she had on a black wig, considerably disordered by the wind, and all awry on her head; her complexion appeared coarse and sunburnt; she

* Voltaire says, in the Siècle de Louis XIV., "that the king hardly spoke to her;" but this is contradicted by the testimony of those who were on the spot, and eyewitnesses.

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had no gloves, and her hands were so dirty that the original colour could not be distinguished; she wore a shirt and a vest, after the masculine fashion, put on very negligently; and a short gray petticoat, embroidered with gold and silver; she held a riding-whip in her hand. Whatever might have been the amazement of Anne of Austria and her court at this strange apparition, for which no previous description could have prepared them, courtly étiquette forbade the slightest expression of it. The king himself, the most fastidious of men, took one of those unlady-like hands, and led Christina forward into a saloon, where a splendid collation was served. The two queens, with the king and Monsieur, sat down to table, and the court stood round gazing on the stranger with unrepressed curiosity. Madame de Motteville observes, that after the first half-hour her sentiments changed, and the same person whom but a short time before she could have mistaken for "une Egyptienne dévergondée," she could not help considering with interest, and even with admiration.*

* Je trouvais qu'elle avait les yeux beaux et vifs: qu'elle avait de la douceur dans le visage et que cette douceur etait mêlée de fierté. Enfin je m'apperçus avec étonnement qu'elle me plaisait, et d'un instant à un autre je me trouvais entièrement changée pour elle.—Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, vol. iv. p. 427.

The following passages from the same work are amusing and characteristic:—"On la mena à la Comédie Italienne. Elle la trouva fort mauvaise, et le dit librement. On l'assura que les comédiens avaient accoutumé de mieux faire. Elle répondit froidement, qu'elle n'en doutait pas puisqu'on les gardait.

"Elle fut à la chasse du sanglier où le roi la convia d'aller. Elle lui avait dit néanmoins, quand on lui proposa d'y aller, qu'elle ne l'aimait point, parcequ'elle était périlleuse, qu'elle ne pouvait souffrir qu'on s'exposât à quelque péril que pour acquérir de la gloire:—(some philosophy in this.)

"Le soir à la comédie Française, elle montra d'avoir l'ame passionée; elle s'écria souvent sur les beaux endroits, paraissant sentir de la joie ou de la douleur, selon les differens sentiments qui étaient exprimés par les vers qui se récitaient devant elle; puis comme si elle eut été toute seule dans son cabinet, se laissant aller sur le dos de sa chaise, après ses exclamations, elle demeura dans une rêverie profonde. La reine même ne l'en pouvait tirer, quoique souvent elle voulut lui parler.

"Son extérieur, à qui on eut voulu juger à son désavantage, était digne de risée et de moquerie. Presque toutes ses actions avaient quelque

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The next day, when she appeared with her wig newly frizzled and powdered, her hands washed, and her dress adjusted with some regard to feminine propriety, she made a more favourable impression. Anne of Austria, on retiring to her chamber, confessed to her ladies, that though she was at first alarmed and disgusted, she could not resist the vivacity of Christina's manners, and the odd fascination which hung about her.

> 'Twas thus Christina every heart alarmed,
> Awed without virtue, without beauty charmed;
> Strange fancies still, and stranger flights she had,
> Was just not ugly, and was just not mad.

During her stay at the French court she had sufficient *tact* to avoid appearing pedantic; she talked well upon every subject, and rallied those around her with much liveliness. She contrived at the same time to keep presumption at a distance; and uncrowned, and unattended as she was, and in spite of a wry wig and dirty hands, "elle faisait la maitresse partout," and put all etiquette out of countenance. After staying a week at Compeigne, she returned to Paris, where she remained till the beginning of November, and then set out for Rome. Her departure formed a curious contrast with her reception: she travelled in a hired carriage with a few attendants, and her expenses through France were defrayed by

chose d'extravagant, et on pouvait avec justice la blamer comme on pouvait avec sujet la louer extrêmement. Elle ne ressemblait en rien à une femme. Elle n'en avait pas la modestie necessaire; elle affectait de paraître homme en toutes ses actions. Elle riait démesurément quand quelque chose la touchait; et particulièrement à la comédie Italienne, lorsque par hazard les bouffonneries en étaient bonnes. Elle éclatait de même en louanges et en soupirs, comme je l'ai déjà dit, quand les sérieuses lui plaisaient. Elle chantait souvent en compagnie, elle rêvait, et sa rêverie allait jusqu'à l'assoupissement. Elle paraissait brusque, inégale, et libertine en toutes ses paroles, tant sur la réligion que sur les choses à quoi la bienséance de son sexe l'obligeait d'être retenue. Elle jurait le nom de Dieu: elle ne pouvait demeurer longtemps dans la même place; en présence du roi, de la reine, et de toute la cour, elle appuyait les jambes sur des sièges aussi hauts que celui ou elle était assise."—Vide Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

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the king.* It is said that she was suspected of a wish to captivate Louis, with a view of marrying him —a design so preposterous, that we cannot believe that she entertained it for a moment. But the suspicion was enough to make the queen-regent and the cardinal hasten her departure.

Christina returned to Rome; but the remembrance of France, and the gayeties and festivities which had distinguished her reception there, the honours which had been paid to her, and the curiosity and admiration she had excited, had apparently left a strong impression on her fancy. Within a few months she found some pretext for repeating her visit, and reached Fontainebleau on the 15th of October, 1657, —no longer conducted by the Duc de Guise, nor welcomed with royal pomp, nor followed by admiring or wondering crowds of the noble, the learned, or the gay, but in "an old worn-out vehicle, an old yellow petticoat, an old red jacket, and a dirty hood."† She was accompanied by the Chevalier Santinelli, who bore the title of captain of her guards, and the Marquis Monaldeschi, her *grand ecuyer* or chamberlain. She was lodged in the palace of Fontainebleau; and here, about a fortnight after her arrival, she enacted that horrible tragedy which, upon consideration of all the circumstances, seems to afford additional proof that this extraordinary woman was really disordered in her intellects.

It appears that she had reason to suspect Monaldeschi of having betrayed her interests, or at least her secrets; but her reasons for doubting him, and the nature of the trust reposed in him, have never been explained. Having satisfied herself of the jus-

* "De là cette amazone Suedoise prit des carrosses de louages que le roi lui fit donner, et de l'argent pour les pouvoir payer; elle s'en alla, suivie seulement de sa chétive troupe; sans train, sans grandeur, sans lit, sans vaisselle d'argent, ni aucune marque royal."—(If this lady of the bedchamber had lived in our days she would have seen the descendant of Louis XIV. travel with less state.)

† Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

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tice of her suspicions, she resolved to put him to death, and executed her resolve with the most deliberate barbarity.

On the 6th of November she sent for Père le Bel, the prior of a neighbouring convent, and placed in his hands a sealed packet of papers. They were standing together in an apartment called the Gallerie des Cerfs, and she desired him to note the day, the hour, and the place in which she had given him these papers. Four days after, the monk was again sent for, and in the same gallery found the queen, with Monaldeschi, Santinelli, and two others. She desired Père le Bel to produce the packet she had formerly given him, and unfolding the letters, turned to Monaldeschi and asked him whether he knew them. The letters were copies, and he denied them, but with a faltering voice; she immediately produced the originals in his own handwriting, and held them up before him. The unfortunate man, who read his fate in her countenance, fell on his knees and entreated mercy; at the same moment Santinelli and the others drew their swords. Monaldeschi hung upon her dress, and shedding a flood of tears endeavoured to move her to compassion. The queen, without reply, turned quietly to the monk:—"Father," said she, "bear witness that I give this man time and opportunity to justify himself, if possible." She then listened calmly to Monaldeschi for about an hour and a quarter, but neither his excuses nor his supplications for mercy appeared to make the slightest impression upon her. She desired Père le Bel to confess and absolve the unhappy culprit, and turned away:* the monk ventured to implore her compas-

* Some contemporary writers add a circumstance of peculiar and almost incredible atrocity. Monaldeschi, who could not be persuaded that the queen was really in earnest, refused to confess himself, and persisted in entreating mercy. Christina, it is said, ridiculed his cowardice. "Give him a stab," said she, with a cool ferocity which makes the blood curdle, "that he may know I am in earnest, and be obliged to confess himself at once:" and it appears that Monaldeschi received two wounds before he would make his confession.

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sion, urging her by every motive of humanity, religion, and even policy, to change her fatal resolve; he represented that the French king would never forgive an act of such cruelty committed within the precincts of his own palace. The queen listened with the same cool self-possession, but remained inflexible, and retired to an adjoining room, while the three executioners, or rather assassins, fell upon Monaldeschi, and put him to death by repeated wounds. He wore a cuirass under his dress, and defended himself with the strength of despair, so that his death was not immediate; and the queen remained coolly listening to the fatal struggle, and to his cries and supplications for mercy, till all was over; she then desired the body to be interred in the convent of Père le Bel, to whom she gave two hundred francs to pray for the soul of Monaldeschi.

This terrible act of private vengeance, this violation of all law, all justice, all human pity, excited the utmost astonishment and horror. Christina, insisting on her *divine rights*, and her exemption as a queen from all responsibility and all human control, did not even condescend to justify what she had done. The king merely requested that she would not for the present leave Fontainebleau to proceed to Paris; but he did not order her to quit his kingdom, nor did he make any public complaint of her conduct. After remaining at Fontainebleau for about two months in a species of exile, she was at length invited to Paris to celebrate the carnival, and again lodged in the Louvre; but the mania with which she had formerly inspired the Parisians was at an end; they criticised and ridiculed her dress and manners, and the murder of Monaldeschi was neither forgotten nor pardoned. After a stay at Paris of about six weeks, she was obliged to understand the various hints which were given for her speedy departure, and returned to Rome.

She was received on her return to the papal court

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with a great display of external respect; and as she suffered continual embarrassment from the want of money and her careless habits, the pope at length granted her a yearly allowance of 12,000 crowns, and appointed the Cardinal Azzolini to be the comptroller of her household. While Azzolini was in fact a kind of spy on all her proceedings, he contrived to insinuate himself completely into her confidence. He had a very pleasing person, bland and polished manners, a lively wit, and sufficient learning to be able to appear much more learned than he really was. These qualities imposed on Christina:* although he was false, superficial, interested, and avaricious, he obtained an influence over her mind which he knew how to improve to his own advantage, and which ended only with her life.

Cardinal Azzolini managed her affairs with prudence and economy, and she was thenceforth spared a repetition of those vexatious and degrading expedients which had so frequently lowered her in the eyes of the Italians. Notwithstanding the philosophical contempt she sometimes affected for all outward state, she entertained at Rome a numerous and royal train: she was sometimes reduced to the necessity of pledging her jewels, plate, medals, &c. for the support of her household, merely because on public occasions she could not bear to be eclipsed in splendour by the Italian nobles, whom she affected to despise.

Although Christina accepted of the pension granted by the pope, and had some reason to be grateful for such a seasonable mark of his beneficence, they were not therefore better friends. Alexander was weak, artificial, trifling;† Christina was

* This is the less surprising when we find that Azzolini completely captivated Algernon Sydney, who speaks of him with the highest esteem and admiration; and as one "who had the reputation of having as good a head as any in Italy."—Sydney Papers, vol. ii.

† He was the same man who had boasted to De Retz, that "for two

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careless, petulant, and haughty; continual subjects of discontent arose between them, which it required all the subtle and insinuating genius of Azzolini to set right. Her journey to France, and the number of French and Spaniards entertained in her suite, had excited the jealousy of the papal court, and she was continually watched, and contradicted about trifles. On one occasion she required permission for two Frenchmen of rank to view the Castle of St. Angelo, which was refused: Christina sent back the messenger with this reply; "Tell the Holy Father that I am not less the daughter of the great Gustavus!" There was indeed a time when the very sound of that mighty name had shaken to its foundation the spiritual and temporal power of the Roman pontiff, and made his tiara tremble on his palsied head:—that time was past; and Alexander only smiled at the impotent sarcasm from one whom he held in dependence upon his bounty. Christina had negotiated a marriage between her major-domo, Santinelli (the same who had stabbed Monaldeschi), and the Duchess de Ceri, a noble and beautiful Roman heiress. The pope intimated his disapproval —Christina persisted: the pope, interfering in a summary manner, shut the young duchess up in a convent, and ordered Santinelli to leave Rome. The queen then dismissed all the Italians from her train, quitted the Palazzo Mazarin, and took up her lodgings in a convent. Here she found herself under the continual *espionnage* of the ecclesiastics. She fretted with inward impatience, but she was in a situation where remonstrance was useless, complaint degrading, and resistance dangerous. It was necessary to study a new and bitter lesson; to be quiet, and to submit. In the midst of these contentions, she maintained a certain appearance of re-

years he had always written with the same pen," from which idle remark, the acute De Retz at once penetrated the shallow frivolity of a mind which would thus add importance to such trifles.

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spect and decorum, mingled several times in the public processions, and begged and received the benediction of his holiness. As if instigated by the spirit of contradiction, she took some pains at this time to conciliate the good-will of the Romans: she was liberal, magnificent, and courteous in all her actions, and defeated the attempts to intimidate or to irritate her by the most resolute self-control.

It must be remarked, as a part of Christina's character, or rather of that inconsistency which bordered on disease, that with her no mode of conduct, no tastes or inclinations, or aims, or pursuits, were permanent. Her love of literature and art, for which, it is said, she sacrificed her throne, had the appearance of a caprice taken up from time to time; and for a long period together she would devote herself to the most trifling amusements;—to the dreams of alchymy, or astrology, or to political intrigues.

In 1660 her cousin Charles Gustavus died in the midst of all his ambitious and warlike plans; he left an infant son, who was immediately proclaimed King of Sweden, by the title of Charles XI. Christina immediately determined to revisit Sweden. The ostensible purpose of this journey was to arrange her affairs, and procure the more punctual payment of her revenue. There can be no doubt that her real object was to take advantage of any opportunity that might offer for the resumption of her crown. She did not perhaps entertain any design of supplanting the infant king, either by treachery or violence; but his health was feeble, his life precarious, and, notwithstanding her absolute renunciation of the kingdom, she pretended to the right of succession, and did not disguise her inclination to claim that right. Having placed all her property, and all her domestic affairs in the hands of Cardinal Azzolini, she dismissed the greatest part of her household, and left Rome with a very small train. She

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proceeded through Germany to Hamburg, where she remained only a few days, and was visited by Algernon Sydney.* She resumed her journey towards Stockholm, travelling with great rapidity, for she was apprehensive that some means would be taken to prevent her entrance into her former kingdom. In fact, nothing could exceed the astonishment, jealousy, and fear which her expected arrival caused, not only among the members of the regency, but among all ranks of the people. She was received upon the frontiers with all external marks of respect, but from the moment she set her foot within the kingdom, her every step was watched and her every action misinterpreted. She was obliged to dismiss all her train of foreigners, to send her confessor and her almoner back to Hamburg, and to hear mass in the chapel of the French ambassador. Her change of religion and her general extravagance and levity of conduct had scandalized the whole nation, particularly the clergy and peasantry. The senate, and those in whom the chief power was now vested, dreaded her talents, and jealously guarded against her interference. Her memorial requiring the payment of the arrears of her income was strongly opposed, under pretence that by her change of religion she had forfeited all claims whatever on the faith of the nation. In that very city, once her own capital, where she had

* Sydney thus mentions her in one of his letters to his father, Lord Leicester. "I left the Queen Christina at Hamburg, with a design of going into Sweden;"—"she is thought to have great designs of which every one judges according to their humour. Some think she will pretend to the crown; others that she will be contented with the regency; and there doth not want those that say that she is employed from Rome to sow dissensions in Sweden. I have conversed a great deal with her, and do not believe a word of all this." He adds, "The French ambassador hath writ to Stockholm, concerning her reception, which precaution was very necessary; for though all the principal persons of the senate owe their fortunes to her, no man can undertake, that, if she should go thither without some engagement for her security, she may not pass the rest of her life in some castle in Sweden, instead of her palace at Rome."—Sydney Papers.

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reigned almost absolute, she was obliged to sue for justice,* and to receive, at length, as a special favour, the fulfilment of a solemn contract. Before she could procure even thus much, the Swedish government, in the name of the young king, extorted from her a second formal renunciation of the kingdom, and of all pretensions, present or future, to the crown of Sweden; and, as her presence was found to be inconvenient and disagreeable, they required, as another condition, that she should either renounce the Roman Catholic religion or leave the kingdom, in either case securing to her the punctual payment of her income. There was no alternative; she submitted, and quitted Sweden, after a residence of seven months.

Christina was never, at any period, remarkable for feeling, but she had boundless pride. At this time she was surrounded by the officers of the Swedish government, by courtiers and spies; she had no friend on earth,—no one near her to whom she could have expressed what she felt. Yet we require no written testimony to conceive what she must have endured at this period; what swelling of the heart—what bitterness of repentance—what concentrated mortification. She returned to Hamburg, where she passed a whole year. She there took into her service a famous alchymist of the time, and expended large sums in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone. In the magnificent delusions of that science she for a while consoled herself for the deep disappointment and mortification she had lately suffered.

* The extraordinary inconsistency of Christina's character renders any thing credible, else we could scarce believe the assertion of one writer (Parival), who says, "La reine, voyant que son autorité était sans pouvoir, eut recours aux larmes, priant à mains jointes les ecclésiastiques de lui vouloir accorder son droit." Christina in tears! and wringing her hands!—The very evening before, when the deputies were representing the artifices of the pope, she replied, with her usual haughty carelessness, "that the pope would not give a doit for them all."

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On her return to Rome in 1662 she was for some time involved in all the disputes between Louis XIV. and the court of Rome. She enjoyed the private satisfaction of seeing the pope humbled: but, disgusted and wearied by these petty vexations, she again turned her eyes towards Sweden; and, as usual, excited by opposition, she endeavoured to negotiate her return, and permission to reside there as a private individual. In 1666 she again left Rome, and proceeded to Hamburg. Thence she despatched a long memorial to the Swedish diet, containing a variety of complaints and allegations. It was during this visit to Hamburg that she was invited to see a very complete and magnificent collection of medals; the proprietor pointed out the very medal which she had caused to be struck to celebrate her abdication.* She immediately flung it from her with an expression of indignation and disgust, and turned away.

During the few weeks she spent at Hamburg, while her emissaries were managing her affairs in Sweden, she lived with great magnificence. She gave a grand banquet to the principal inhabitants of the city. It was followed by the representation of a kind of lyrical ballet, founded on the story of the "Jerusalem Delivered," in which she played the part of Armida.

She soon afterward proceeded on her journey to Sweden. The regency and the senate did not think it advisable to *forbid* the entrance of the daughter of Gustavus into her former capital; but they were resolved to prevent it if possible. They sent her a list of the conditions on which she would be permitted to visit Stockholm. They were absolutely insulting, since they contained an implied accusation, or at least suspicion, of treason, as well as the

* It represented on one side a fine profile of the queen, and on the reverse a crown, with the words *et sine te*; intimating, with short-sighted vainglory, that she could do without it.

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absolute prohibition to exercise any rite of her religion while in the country. Before she had time to deliberate on this stroke of diplomacy, they followed it up by a decree, forbidding her to approach the court of the young king, or to take up her residence in any part of the Swedish dominions, except Pomerania. They published a defence of these harsh measures, in which they alluded to the murder of Monaldeschi as a proof of the alteration of her character and principles of government since she had quitted her own country; they accused her of openly asserting pretensions to the crown in case of the death of the young king; they insisted upon the general horror which her change of religion had occasioned; and their fear lest she should have been corrupted by the artifices and policy of the Italian ecclesiastics; they affected to regard her as a tool in the hands of the pope (this was the unkindest cut of all); they remarked that it had ever been the vice of the family of Vasa to grow cruel and tyrannical as they grew old; and that the degree of independence she had asserted was not compatible with the honour of the king or the safety of the kingdom. She was by this time advanced as far as Norköping, once a favourite palace and residence of her own. Here she was met by the decree of the senate; she immediately turned her back, refused to receive any further civility from the king or his officers; spent the whole night in arranging her departure, and travelled with such celerity, that in ten days she was again at Hamburg.*

While thus engaged, she received intelligence of the death of her patron and tormentor, Pope Alexander VII., and of the election of her friend Cardinal Rospigliosi, who, on ascending the papal chair had taken the name of Clement IX. She celebrated

* Among those who were most active in mortifying the queen was her former favourite, the Count Magnus de la Gardie, who boasted that he had made Christina tremble with fear.

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this event by giving a grand fête; but forgetting, or not deigning to remember, that she was in a Protestant city, she illuminated the front of her palace, and exhibited an allegorical transparency, representing the adoration of the Eucharist, and the Roman church trampling heresy under her feet. When the meaning of this was explained to the gaping townspeople, already half-drunk with the wine which by the queen's orders had been freely dispensed, they were seized with indignation; they destroyed her transparency, broke her lamps and her windows, and had nearly pulled down her palace about her ears. The queen herself escaped with some difficulty; she took the whole matter with much good-humour, and understanding that many persons were hurt and wounded in the affray, she sent two thousand crowns to be distributed among the sufferers.

She had reason to rejoice at the accession of Rospigliosi; for just at this time nothing could have been more seasonable or more agreeable. She had recently embarked in a new and important intrigue, in which she required and received all the aid which the Roman government could bestow, either in money or influence. The elective throne of Poland having become vacant this year (1667), we find Christina, after having flung away the crown her father had bequeathed to her, the most eager of all the competitors for a crown which he had almost trampled upon. The absurdity, inconsistency, and utter hopelessness of this project were apparent then, and may well astonish us now; but the surprising genius, the sagacity, and the learning of this unaccountable woman are not less apparent in the artful and powerfully written letters and instructions which she drew up herself for the ministers she employed.

This secret negotiation was still pending when she returned to Rome, in November, 1668: the few months which immediately succeeded might, perhaps, be accounted among the least unhappy which

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Christina had passed since her abdication. She was occupied by an important state intrigue, which called forth all her talents and her activity of mind. Sanguine as she was restless, she indulged in visions of future power, and already fancied herself leading a Polish army against the Turks, and regulating the affairs of Europe: while the reigning pontiff, a man of a gay, benign temper, and magnificent spirit, animated Rome by his brilliant court, and nothing was thought of but amusements, sacred or profane. An opera or a ballet one day,—a religious procession the next. Christina hired a palazetto on the Corso, to enjoy these public spectacles; but her pleasures were imbittered by one trifling circumstance. The Princess Colonna had presumed to erect a balcony exactly opposite to that of the queen, where she sat pre-eminent in beauty and blazing with jewels, and Christina could not prevail on the courteous pope to have it pulled down. The Princess Colonna was, without the title, queen in Rome,—Christina was only the queen at Rome;—she was sometimes made to feel the distinction.

Clement IX. died in 1669, to the great regret of the Romans. Christina, whose Polish negotiation was now at an end, engaged in a new intrigue to raise her friend Cardinal Conti to the papal chair;* but in this she failed; the election fell on Cardinal Altieri, who took the name of Clement X. He was an old man of eighty, in whom every passion was extinguished except avarice: he took very little interest either in Christina or any of her concerns. Left to herself, she resumed her literary pursuits with extreme ardour, and spent immense sums in the purchase of pictures, medals, antiques, manuscripts, and other curiosities. The celebrated Academy of the Arcadia took its first rise from the literary men

* The brother of Conti, the Duke di Poli, was at this time her master of horse; and the Duchess Muti, his sister, her principal lady in waiting.

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who were accustomed to meet at her palace, and who formed her habitual circle. Among these may be mentioned three who did real honour to her patronage: Filicaja and Guidi, two of the most celebrated lyric poets of Italy; and Cassini, the astronomer. It has excited surprise that Filicaja should have prostituted his sublime genius to sing the praises of Christina; but the incense laid upon an unworthy altar,—the sacrifice offered up to a false divinity, is sometimes hallowed by the sincerity or the gratitude of the worshipper. Christina had loaded Filicaja with benefits, had protected him when poor, and had educated his two sons at her expense. In return, he has placed upon her brow a glorious wreath of poetical praise. She was proud to wear it living, and being dead it may be allowed to hang unmolested upon her tomb. No one attempted to remove the garland of flowers which a grateful freedman flung upon the grave of Nero:—but he was not therefore less a monster.

During the next few years Christina appears to have passed her time chiefly in study, in collecting works of art, in making experiments in chymistry, in corresponding with most of the eminent scholars and learned societies of Europe, and intermeddling now and then with the political intrigues of France, Spain, and Germany; her revenues were more punctually paid, and she maintained at Rome a retinue of about four hundred persons, one year with another. Clement X. died in 1676; her intrigues in favour of Cardinal Conti were again unsuccessful, and the choice of the conclave fell on Cardinal Odescalchi, (Pope Innocent XI.) an old man, whose plain, firm good sense, and simplicity of character, were not to be dazzled by Christina's accomplishments, nor discomposed by her eccentricities. During his pontificate she became involved in some disputes with the papal court, which will further illustrate her character.

It appears that certain privileges and immunities

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had long been extended to the retinues of the foreign ambassadors at Rome, and these, instead of being confined to their own families and residences, at length extended to the immediate neighbourhood, so that there were, in fact, two-thirds of the city in which it was contrary to etiquette to arrest a criminal. The various abuses to which this state of things naturally led became at length intolerable. The pope would no longer allow his jurisdiction to be circumscribed, and the laws defied under his eyes, and in his own capital. The King of Spain and the emperor yielded to his remonstrances. The King of France, after a long resistance and many disputes, at length gave way. Christina, in a very sensible letter to the pope, resigned her privileges to a certain extent; her residence and the persons of her suite being of course considered as sacred and inviolable. But the affair did not end here. A man, convicted of some offence, was seized by the sbirri: as they were driving him with blows through the streets he escaped, and ran to take shelter in a stable attached to the palace of the queen. It was locked; but he seized upon the staple or chain of the door with such force, that no efforts of the sbirri could tear him away: they put a cord round his neck, and still, with the courage or the obstinacy of despair, he kept his hold, though on the brink of strangulation. Christina was at this moment in her chapel, and a multitude had gathered round her palace: the noise of the affray, the shouts, cries, and imprecations of the populace, reached her. She no sooner learned the cause than she ordered Landini, the captain of her guards, and another of her attendants to rescue the man, and to cut down the officers of justice if they resisted: the cowardly sbirri fell on their knees, and at once resigned their prisoner, who was carried off amid shouts of "Viva la Regina!" and placed in safety. The queen loudly complained of the insult offered to her dignity, in attempting to arrest a man

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within the precincts of her palace. The pope as loudly insisted on the insult offered to his authority; and his treasurer demanded that Landini and his companion should be immediately delivered up to justice. The queen replied to the treasurer in these words, under her own hand.*

"To dishonour yourself and your master is then termed justice in your tribunal? I pity and despise you now; but shall pity you much more when you become cardinal. Take my word, that those whom you have condemned to death shall live, if it please God, some time longer; and if they should die by any other hand than His, they shall not fall alone.

"CHRISTINA ALESSANDRA.

"From my palace, this 24th July, 1687."

Meantime she armed her suite, protected her attendants, who, in fact, had only acted by her orders, and openly braved the pope; being in every thing supported and abetted by the French ambassador, with whom she now made common cause against the papal government. The Cardinal Albani endeavoured in vain to bring the royal amazon to reason: he reminded her that he whom she thus defied was the pope. "And what if he be a pope?" replied Christina; "I will make him know that I am a queen." The straight-forward old pope, without being in the slightest degree discomposed by her violence and imperial airs, maintained an imperturbable *sang froid*. One very warm day that she had paraded the streets with her armed servants, including the two who had been denounced, the pope sent her a present of some exquisite fruit from his garden on the Monte Cavallo, accompanied by a polite message. She thanked him, but added, "Do not let the pope imagine that he can lull me to sleep with his feigned courtesies!" When

* This letter has become celebrated for its energetic brevity: the original is in Italian.

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this was repeated to the pope, he merely shrugged up his shoulders, and observed, "è donna!"—"'tis a woman!" Considering to whom he applied the expression, he could not have used a more insulting term of contempt: Christina accordingly was furious —she compared herself to Cæsar among the pirates. The pope, driven to harsh measures, and determined to carry his point, excommunicated the French ambassador (Lavardin), and withdrew the pension of 12,000 ducats which Christina had hitherto enjoyed. "Tell him," said she, in answer to this notification, "that I have accepted his benefits as a penance inflicted on me by the hand of God, and I thank him for having removed from me such a subject of shame and humiliation."

This contention with the pope served to amuse and excite her during the remainder of her life.* She was now about sixty, and her health began to decline. She told Burnet in 1687 that she considered herself as "one of the *antiquities* of Rome," and by all others she was certainly regarded as one of its greatest curiosities. A traveller, who was introduced to her at this period, has left us a very graphic description of her person and dress. She had discarded the doublet, "couleur de flamme," the black wig, "bien poudrée," and the laced cravat with its knot of scarlet ribands; and her attire, though scarcely more becoming to her sex, was rather more suitable to her age. She was usually habited in a coat or vest of black satin, reaching almost to the knees, and buttoned down the front; under this a very short petticoat. Her own light brown hair, once so beautiful and luxuriant, was cut short and combed up so as to stand on end, without covering or ornament. She was very short, fat, and round; her voice, her features, and her complexion were completely masculine, and had ceased to be in any respect agreeable. Her eyes, however, retained

* After her death the pope carried his point, and the abuses of which he complained were entirely abolished.

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their brilliance, and "her tongue bewitched as oddly as her eyes." Her manners, whenever she chose, were winning. She kept up a splendid court, received strangers affably, and conversed with the utmost freedom.*

She corresponded at this time with Madame Dacier and Mademoiselle de Scuderi, whom she deigned with one or two others, to exempt from the general scorn with which she regarded her own sex. Her last letter to Mademoiselle de Scuderi contains the following very characteristic passage:—"You must know that since you saw me some years ago I am not grown handsomer; far from it: and, to confess the truth, I am still, in spite of flattery, as ill satisfied with my own person as ever I was. I envy not those who possess fortune, dominions, treasures; but I would fain raise myself above all mortals by wisdom and virtue; and that is what makes me discontented. *Au reste*—I am in good health, which will last as long as it pleases God. I have naturally an extreme aversion to grow old, and I hardly know how I shall get used to the idea. If I had had my choice between old age and death, I think I should have chosen the latter without hesitation. But since we are not consulted on this point, I shall resign myself to live on with as much pleasure as I can. Death, which I see approaching step by step, does not alarm me. I await it without a wish, and without a fear."

Wearied at length by her paltry disputes with the pope, Christina was meditating a retreat from Rome, and had some hopes of erecting for herself an independent principality in Germany. She had already entered into some negotiations on this subject, when all her projects and all her vexations were ter-

* She said to Burnet when he visited her, "Providence had need have a special care of this Holy See of ours; since I have lived here I have seen four popes, and (with an oath) all fools and blockheads!"

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minated by death, and her restless spirit found repose in the tomb.

She was seized with a malignant fever, of which she died on the 19th of April, 1689, having just completed her sixty-third year. Her constitution was naturally so strong, that she appears to have had a hard struggle with death, and twice recovered after being given over, and twice relapsed, before she finally sank under the influence of her disease. In her last moments she sent Albani (afterward Clement XI.) to solicit the pardon of the pope for all her offences against him, and the good-natured old man sent her a plenary absolution for all her sins. Cardinal Azzolini, who retained his influence to the last, drew up a will, in which he was himself declared sole heir to all her property, with the exception of a few legacies to her household. Christina signed this paper when almost in a state of insensibility, and soon afterward expired.

She was interred with the utmost pomp in the church of St. Peter, the pope himself officiating, and all the cardinals and the principal nobility of Rome assisting at the ceremony. By her will Christina had ordered that the only epitaph on her tomb should be these words:—"Vixit Christina, anni LXIII."—"Christina lived sixty-three years;" but, if I remember rightly, the cenotaph in St. Peter's, erected to her memory by Cardinal Albani, exhibits, besides these words, a long Latin inscription.

Cardinal Azzolini derived no advantage from his rich inheritance; before even the preliminary forms were settled which enabled him to take possession of the property, he died at Rome, within three months after the death of Christina. It is said that Azzolini was her lover: the same has been asserted of Monaldeschi and others. On this point it may be observed, once for all, that Christina has left behind her a reputation for chastity rather worse than problematical; but in the testimony brought against

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her, there is so much that is evidently false, so much that is improbable, so much that is unsupported by proof of any kind, that it would be very easy to defend her plausibly if it were worth while; but it is not. When Christina threw aside all the decorum of her sex in her language and deportment, she cast away the surest safeguard of her reputation as a woman; and ceasing to be respectable, she ceased to be interesting. It was in vain afterward that she called on the French government to punish the satirists who had libelled her in prose and verse. In vain that she has left behind her in her memoirs a solemn appeal to her Maker, in which she expresses her gratitude that though so often "on the edge of the precipice, she had never fallen." She had too often "touched the brink of all we hate," to be believed on her own words, or absolved by any testimony whatever: no one has ever given much credit to her professions, or thought the question of her guilt or innocence a matter of importance. People were content to take her for that which she was content to appear. Whether Monaldeschi owed his death to the jealousy of an impassioned woman or the anger of an offended queen remains still a mystery, but I should suppose the latter. It may be doubted whether Christina ever loved, or was loved, in the whole course of her life.

The property which Christina left at her death was estimated at about 500,000*l.* of our money. Her cabinet of medals* and antiques, which was the finest in the world, was purchased by the Odeschalchi family: her magnificent collection of books and MSS. was purchased by Alexander VIII., and now forms part of the library of the Vatican. It appears, that while in Italy she cultivated a real taste for art; her gallery contained some of the most splendid works of the Italian masters. The greatest part of

* The cabinet of medals which had belonged to Charles I., and some of his finest pictures, were in the possession of Christina.

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these were purchased by the Regent Duke of Orleans, and on the dispersion of his gallery, after the revolution, found their way to England.*

Her passion for medals was a kind of mania; she entertained the design of giving the history of her life in a series of medals, and about one hundred were engraved at different times: the subjects and inscriptions were generally her own invention, and stamped with her peculiar character. The last of these medals, struck in 1689, bears the head of the queen on one side, and on the reverse a bird of Paradise, soaring far above the land, the sea, and the clouds, with the inscription in Italian, "Libero io nacqui, e vissi, e morró sciolto." "I was born, have lived, and will die free."

Christina was a patroness of music, and extremely sensible to all the pleasure it can bestow. While she reigned in Sweden she had some of the best Italian musicians in her service; and during her residence at Rome, the first theatre for the performance of operas was erected partly under her auspices in the year 1671. "The year 1680," says Dr. Burney, "is rendered memorable to musicians by the opera of *L'Onesta d'Amore;* as it was the first dramatic composition of the elegant, profound, and original composer Alessandro Scarlatti, who has so many titles to lasting fame. This early production of Scarlatti was performed in the palace of the Queen of Sweden." Scarlatti was indebted to the munificence and taste of Christina for his first success at Rome, and ever afterward remembered her with gratitude. He was the precursor of Purcel and Handel, and the founder of the Neapolitan school

* For the pictures which hung in her presence-chamber the pope offered her, during her life, sixty thousand Roman crowns, which she refused. Looking over the catalogue of her pictures, we find that Correggio's "Venus teaching Cupid to read," now at Holderness House, Raffaelle's St. John, in the Grosvenor gallery, and several pictures in the Stafford gallery, once belonged to Christina.

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of music, which produced Pergolesi, Paesiello, and at last Cimarosa.

Christina left several literary works in manuscript, some of which are lost. The fragment of her own memoirs, which she did not live to complete, begins with a solemn dedication to the Author of her being, "as having been, by his grace, the most favoured of all his creatures; she thanks him for having made subservient to his glory and to her happiness, the vigour of her mind, the possession of health, fortune, royal birth, greatness, and all that could result from an assemblage of noble and admirable qualities. To have made her absolute sovereign over the bravest and most glorious nation of the earth was assuredly the least of her obligations to Him, since, after having bestowed upon her all these blessings, he had called her to the glory of making the most perfect sacrifice of all her fortune, her greatness, and her splendour for his sake, and greatly restoring what he had so graciously lent her." In the same spirit of vainglorious self-complacency, she gives a list of her faults, which she confesses that she can dissemble, but never took sufficient pains to correct.* But then she thanks Heaven that they have all, by especial providence, turned to the glory of her Creator and her own advantage. This curious fragment does not extend beyond the first six or seven years of her life, and was written about the year 1681. It does not appear that it was ever completed.

There are also "Reflections on the Life and Character of Alexander the Great," published by Archenholtz; a vast collection of letters, and some maxims in the manner of Rochefoucauld, but far inferior.

Among the sayings of Christina, a few are worth

* "J'étais méfiante, soupçonneuse, de plus ambitieuse jusqu'à l'excès. J'étais colere et emportée, superbe et impatiente, méprisante et railleuse." She confesses she had many other faults, which she passes over in silence—"parceque rien n'est parfait dans ce monde."

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remarking, either for their truth, or as characteristic of the woman.

"Fools," she was accustomed to say, "are more to be feared than the wicked."

"Whatever is false is ridiculous."

"There is a species of pleasure in suffering from the ingratitude of others which is reserved for great minds alone."

"We should never speak of ourselves either good or evil." This was a maxim which she was continually violating in her own person: she appears to have been the greatest egotist extant (for a female).

"To suffer for having acted well is itself a species of recompense."

"We read for instruction, for correction, and for consolation."

"There is a star above us which unites souls of the first order, though worlds and ages separate them."

"Life becomes useless and insipid when we have no longer either friends or enemies."

"We grow old more through indolence than through age."

"The Salique law, which excludes women from the throne, is a just and a wise law."

"Cruelty is the result of baseness and of cowardice."

"To speak truth, and to do good, is to resemble in some sort the Deity we worship."

"This life is like an inn, in which the soul spends a few moments on its journey."

There are several anecdotes related of Christina, which I do not find under any particular date, and which may, therefore, be inserted here.

When Michael Dahl, a Swedish painter, who was afterward in the service of William III., visited Rome, he was employed to paint a portrait of Christina. One day, while she was sitting to him, she asked him what he intended to put in her hand.

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"A fan, please your majesty."—"A fan!" exclaimed Christina, starting up, with a tremendous oath; "a fan!—A lion, man! a lion is fitter for the Queen of Sweden!"

Once, as she was looking with evident admiration at Bernini's statue of Truth, a cardinal *bel-esprit*, who was standing by, exclaimed, with an air of gallantry, "Heaven be praised that your majesty so much admires truth, a thing which so few princes can even tolerate!"—"No wonder," replied the queen instantly, "all truths are not of marble!" (*Je le crois bien—c'est que toutes les verités ne sont pas de marbre.*)

A manuscript volume, containing an account of her conversion from Lutheranism to popery, having been sent to her, she wrote a few words on the back of it, which have since passed into a proverb, and may well be applied to the principal actors on many other occasions:—"Chi lo sa, non scrive: chi lo scrive non sa;"—"The person who knows all about it does not write; and the writer knows nothing of the matter."

One day that she was laughing and talking very loud during the celebration of the mass, the pope, as a gentle hint, sent her his own rosary, and desired her to make use of it. "Non miga voglio essere un' Catolica da bacchettone!" exclaimed Christina, making use of a strong, but rather vulgar expression, which signifies that she had not become a Catholic to tell her beads.

One of Christina's characteristics was a passion for meddling in the affairs of others. She had correspondents in every court of Europe, and to the end of her life there was no event of any importance in which she did not take some part. She was fond of volunteering advice, which, from a sovereign at the head of a powerful nation, was listened to at least with respect; but when she sank into an individual, her officious propensities and her assumption of political importance became ridiculous. Thus,

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before her abdication, she interfered between Louis XIV. and his nobles,* afterward between France and Spain, between Charles II. and Cromwell, between Poland and Sweden, &c. Christina was an example of what we often see in private life; but she seems to have possessed excellent judgment in everybody's affairs but her own. Though her advice was sometimes admirable, and her interference well meant, it was never serviceable to others, and, except in one instance, never very creditable to herself. Her letter to the Chevalier Terlon relative to the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and her advice to Louis XIV. against the persecution of the Protestants, remain extant, to claim the admiration of posterity, and to show how justly and how nobly this strange woman could sometimes both think and feel.

The manner in which Christina judged the characters of Cromwell and Louis XIV. is an instance of her sagacity. She used to compare Cromwell to her ancestor, Gustavus Vasa, while she ridiculed the shallow pomposity of Louis; and this at a time when the stream of public opinion ran the contrary way in both cases. Yet the same woman was deceived and misled by the charlatan Bourdelot, and thought Azzolini a greater man than Oxenstiern.

But to attempt to recount all her monstrous inconsistencies of conduct and character were a vain task. At one time frank, even to audacity; at another, dissembling, from the meanest motives: at one time magnanimous and benevolent; at another, revengeful as a fury, and cruel as a tigress: now we behold her as one

> "——To whose daring spirit,
> To touch the stars had seemed an easy flight;"

and anon we see her crawling at the foot of that

* During the wars of the Fronde, her hero, the Prince de Condé, might have thanked her for his banishment, which was partly caused by her intermeddling on this occasion.—*Vide Notes to Evelyn's Correspondence.*

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petty throne which her great father had nearly humbled to the dust! Philosophy in her mouth, folly in her head, and pride in her heart,—to what purpose were all her talents, her intellectual power, her acquired knowledge? Unsustained by moral dignity, unenlightened by true religion, unwarmed by any generous principle or tender affection, her mind resembled a chaos, in which the elements of greatness and goodness were mixed up confusedly with every perverse ingredient that ever entered into the composition of man or woman.

ANNE.

QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

Anne Stuart, the second daughter of James Duke of York, younger brother of Charles the Second, was born at the palace of St. James's on the 6th of February, 1664. Her mother was Anne Hyde, the daughter of the celebrated Lord Chancellor Clarendon. The marriage of the duke with Anne Hyde gave great offence at court, on account of her inferior birth; and the old queen-dowager, Henrietta Maria, vowed in a rage that when "that woman entered Whitehall at one door, she would go out at the other." Yet she was afterward reconciled to the duchess, and acknowledged her as her daughter. Anne Hyde possessed considerable talents and strength of character; without any pretensions to beauty, she had a very noble and commanding presence, and wore her dignity with much more grace than either of her daughters afterward wore the crown they successively inherited.

The Lady Anne, as she was then called, had as an infant very delicate health, and at five years old

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was taken to France, in hopes that a milder air would restore her. Hence it appears that she was absent when her mother, after a lingering illness, died in 1671, having first declared herself a Roman Catholic, to the great grief of her father, Lord Clarendon. The education of the two young princesses, Mary and Anne, was intrusted to Protestants; and so great was the public jealousy excited by the religion of their father, that they were brought up with more than common strictness in the tenets of the reformed faith. It is generally admitted that the duke never attempted to interfere with their education in this particular, though they resided constantly with him and his second wife, Maria of Modena, a very amiable woman, but, like her husband, a bigoted Roman Catholic. The whole family lived together as if there had been no differences in point of religion; and the Duchess Maria treated her husband's children with extreme kindness.

The early years of the Princess Anne are chiefly remarkable for the commencement of a friendship which, as it coloured her future life, had no small influence on the destinies of Europe.

Two sisters, whose names were Frances and Sarah Jennings, were distinguished in the court for their beauty and accomplishments. The eldest, Frances, had been maid of honour to the first Duchess of York; she was thus the means of introducing to the notice of the second duchess her sister Sarah, who became at twelve years old the companion and playfellow of the young princesses. Anne, who was then about nine years of age, and of a very gentle and affectionate disposition, attached herself to Sarah Jennings, whose talent, high spirit, and vivacity completely captivated her. The inequality of their years, and the greater inequality in point of understanding, were supplied by the difference of rank; and this friendship, begun in childish fondness, appears to have been heightened by the very contrast

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of character into the most romantic devotion, at least on the part of Anne. Sarah Jennings was subsequently appointed maid of honour to the Duchess of York, thus continuing her residence under the same roof with the young princess. Even on the marriage of the former with Colonel Churchill in 1678, they do not appear to have been separated; for Churchill was attached to the service of the Duke of York, as gentleman of his bedchamber; and when the duke and his family were sent by Charles the Second into a kind of exile to Scotland and to Holland, the Lady Anne accompanied her father, and the Churchills were generally in their suite.

When Anne was about seventeen, it was thought proper that she should be married, and the Electoral Prince of Hanover, afterward George the First, came over to pay his addresses to her. He did not, however, succeed in his suit; and from the conduct of this prince to the wife he afterward married, Anne had some reason to rejoice in her escape, although the union would have prevented many disputes relative to the succession. Her next suitor was George, Prince of Denmark, brother to the king of that country, who was invited over in 1683. He is described as a fair, good-humoured, heavy-looking young man, who spoke bad French, loved good wine, and was rather awkward and bashful in his manners. He succeeded, however, in pleasing "the gentle Lady Anne," and they were married on the 28th of July, 1683; both being endued with good dispositions and equal tempers, and neither of them very capable of discovering each other's deficiencies, this marriage proved extremely happy, and they lived together in uninterrupted harmony.

The death of Charles II. in 1685, and the accession of her father to the throne, made little difference in the domestic arrangements of the Princess Anne, and none in her political position. She formed habitually one of her father's court; continued appa-

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rently on the best terms with her mother-in-law, the young queen; and resided quietly at Whitehall, where her usual amusements were court-gossip and card-playing, the society of her friend Lady Churchill, and the duties of her nursery. She became the mother of two daughters, who died in their infancy. But, by the course of political events, Anne was soon called on to play a part much more important, and very unsuited both to her abilities and her inclinations.

James the Second had not been many months on the throne before he began to entertain designs against the religion and liberty of the state, which alarmed all those who loved their country. Under the influence of the Roman Catholic priesthood, particularly of Father Petre, his confessor, he pursued these designs with a degree of obstinacy which appears like infatuation, and which disgusted and alienated his best friends. Anne, who was sincerely religious, was shocked by her father's conduct. She says, in one of her letters to her sister Mary, "Lord Sunderland stirs up the king to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. Things are come to that pass now, that if they go on much longer I believe in a little while no Protestant will be able to live;" and she afterward adds, in the same letter, "I am resolved to undergo any thing rather than change my religion; nay, if it should come to such extremities, I will choose to live on alms rather than change."*

Anne was at this time in the hands of a party opposed to the court, who exaggerated these dangers, and, from motives not always the most pure or pious, worked up her passive temper to the degree of energy necessary for their own purposes.

Lady Churchill, a strong-minded, penetrating woman, saw that the measures pursued by King James

* Dalrymple, Appendix, p. 209.

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were leading him to destruction; and the boundless influence she possessed over the princess was employed in strengthening her in her opposition to her father. The consequences were, that when William, Prince of Orange, landed in 1688, the Prince of Denmark and Lord Churchill were among the first who joined him.* Anne remained at Whitehall, trembling for the event. When James returned towards London, she was so overpowered by the apprehension of his displeasure, that all presence of mind forsook her. She declared to Lady Churchill, that "rather than meet the eyes of her injured father she would jump out of the window." The same night, through the management and presence of mind of Lady Churchill and the Countess of Dorset, she escaped in the Earl of Dorset's carriage, and went down to the earl's house at Nottingham, where she remained unmolested, and without taking any part in affairs till the revolution was completed. Anne was her father's favourite, and it was on hearing of her flight that he exclaimed, with tears, "God help me! my own children have forsaken me!"

The conduct of Anne during this crisis has been defended by some writers, as being dictated by principle; and excused by others, on the plea of expediency, or rather of necessity. But we listen to these excuses without either sympathy or conviction. Her situation was a painful one, no doubt; but seems to have caused her more fright and perplexity than grief or pain. There is a passage in the journal of her uncle, Lord Clarendon, which exhibits in a striking manner the cold passiveness with which Anne looked on while her father was hurry-

* The Prince of Denmark had been accustomed, when he heard of the defection of any of those who had been favoured by the king, to say, "*Est-il possible?*" The only remark James made upon the prince's flight was, "Is *Est-il possible* gone too?" In King James's Memoirs it is said "he was more troubled at the unnaturalness of the action than the want of his service, for that the loss of a good trooper had been of greater consequence."—*Clarendon's Diary*, vol. ii. p. 208.

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ing to his destruction; and the indolent temper and manner of the woman are placed before us in a few words:—"I took the liberty," says Lord Clarendon, "to represent that it was a pity nobody would take this opportunity of speaking freely and honestly to the king; that I humbly thought it very proper for her royal highness to say something to him, and to beg him to confer with some of his old friends, who had always served him faithfully. She answered, she never spoke to the king on business. I said her father could not but take it well to see her royal highness so concerned for him; to which she replied, he had no reason to doubt her concern. I said all I could to put her upon speaking to him, telling her it might possibly produce some good effect, and no ill come of it. But she would not be prevailed upon. The more I pressed her, the more reserved she was; and said she must dress herself, it was almost prayer-time."*

James had so strong a party, so many who disapproved of his measures were attached to his family, and the beauty and innocence of his young queen had rendered her so popular among the nobility, that had he remained in England and abandoned his pernicious and illegal measures, all might yet have been well; but, seized with a kind of panic, he quitted the country. The parliament then declared the throne "vacant;" and, after drawing up the celebrated act called the "*Bill of Rights*," by which the liberties of the people were better secured, and the royal prerogative very much diminished, they obliged the Prince of Orange to sign it, and raised him and his consort, the eldest daughter of James the Second, to the throne, to reign jointly, under the titles of William the Third and Mary the Second. In case of their death without leaving posterity, it was settled that the Princess Anne should succeed them;

* Clarendon's Diary, vol. ii. p. 191

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and in case Anne also died without heirs, then the Princess Sophia, the Electress of Hanover, who was the daughter of Elizabeth of Bohemia, the sister of Charles I., was to succeed to the English crown, being, with all her family, of the Protestant religion. This change of the government and of the usual order of succession is called in English history "THE REVOLUTION;" and as it is used as an epoch, and it is common to hear that such an event happened before or after the revolution, it is worth while to remember that it took place in 1688, exactly one hundred years before the first French revolution of 1789.

By these extraordinary events Anne became a person of great importance in the state, and her consequence was increased by the birth of a son in July, 1689, who was regarded as the presumptive heir to the crown, and immediately created Duke of Gloucester.

The two sisters, Queen Mary and the Princess Anne, had hitherto lived on good terms; but soon after the revolution they began to quarrel, in a manner that was equally unsisterly and uncourtly. Anne was dissatisfied with the revenue allowed her, while Mary and William thought her demands of 70,000*l.* a year too unreasonable; they even threatened to curtail her allowance of 30,000*l.* a year which she had received from her father. Anne was incensed; she was not naturally violent, but she had her friend Lady Churchill (now the Countess of Marlborough) ever at her side, to supply all that was wanting in warmth and determination of purpose. This violent and haughty woman fomented the disputes between the sisters. The king and queen were obliged to make a compromise, and allow the princess 50,000*l.* a year. Some disgraceful scenes of altercation took place; and as Lord and Lady Marlborough were known to be the enthusiastic partisans, and probably the advisers, of Anne, they fell under the heaviest displeasure of the court. The Earl of Marlborough

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was deprived of all his offices, and the queen wrote a very severe and peremptory letter to her sister, commanding her to dismiss the countess from her service. The lord chamberlain, at the same time, sent Lady Marlborough the royal order to remove from Whitehall. This was too much to bear: Anne immediately left Whitehall herself, and took up her residence at Berkeley House.

The resentment which Anne felt at this treatment of her friend and favourite very naturally added to the excess of her attachment. They had long lived upon such equal and confidential terms, that the restraints of rank and custom were laid aside; the princess had assumed the name of Mrs. Morley, while Lady Marlborough chose the name of Mrs. Freeman, being suitable, as she observed, to the frankness of her disposition; and under these feigned names they were accustomed to address each other in their letters and conversation. On the present occasion Lady Marlborough offered to withdraw from the service of the princess rather than be the cause of these disputes; she probably knew how this offer would be received before she made it. Anne overwhelmed her with tender expostulations, and, having occasion to send her a note, she added, "And now I have this opportunity of writing, my dear Mrs. Freeman must give me leave to tell her, if ever she should be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs. Morley, she will rob her of the joy of her life; for if that day should come, I should never enjoy another happy minute; and I swear to you I would shut myself up, and never see a creature." In another letter she says, "Let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing my dear Mrs. Freeman; and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her, without repining; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs. Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a mo-

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ment's happiness in this world or the next if ever she proves false to you." These protestations are not well expressed, but they came warm from the heart of the writer, and were sincere at the moment; the changes which afterward took place make them curious and interesting. The phrase "as long as you are kind," which often occurs in Anne's notes and letters to her friend, shows that the petulant and fiery character of the favourite not having yet led her to presume too far, had only served to increase her influence, and to excite and interest the colder temper of Anne. But in the long run gentleness alone can claim enduring power, as we shall see.

The death of Queen Mary, in December, 1694, made a change in Anne's position. Though the sisters had never been reconciled, the tenderness of Anne was excited by the queen's danger, and she sent an affectionate entreaty to be admitted to her chamber. This was refused, but Mary sent her a forgiving message, and soon afterward expired. She died at Kensington palace, in her thirty-third year.

Mary had many good qualities. The consistent and undeviating propriety of her conduct towards a very unamiable and ungracious husband rendered her both estimable and interesting. She loved him truly, and was the most submissive of wives to a man who owed his throne to her; her sweetness stood between him and the national dislike, so that a part of his unpopularity fell upon her. Her conduct in ascending the throne of her father appears very unfilial, and procured her the title of "the second Tullia;" perhaps, considering the circumstances, it was unavoidable; but she showed so much unconcern and exultation in the first instance, that for a time every heart was turned against her. She excused herself by saying that she had been commanded by the prince her husband "to put on a cheerfulness, and act a part not natural to her."

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Here dissimulation, as usual, defeated its own purpose, for her apparent want of feeling disgusted and scandalized all around her. It is said that she frequently sent assistance to the exiled king, who was then living at St. Germain's; that she would not permit any one to allude to him with disrespect, and those who were most in her confidence believed, that had she survived her husband she would have done her utmost to restore her father to his throne, but under proper restrictions. It is hardly possible to imagine a situation more painful than that of Mary, when her husband and her father were opposed to each other in Ireland in 1690; and the battle of the Boyne, where both fought in person, would have almost distracted a woman of stronger feelings. In her letters and her conversation Mary expressed the tenderest anxiety for the safety of her husband, and the utmost delight at his success. She never alluded to her father; but it would be unjust to argue that therefore she did not think of him and feel for him. On the whole, Queen Mary was much superior in talent and power of character to her sister Anne, though less amiable and popular, both as a queen and a woman.

On the death of her sister, the princess showed the native kindness of her disposition; for, laying aside all animosity, she immediately waited on the king, and expressed the share she took in his grief, and her willingness to do any thing in her power to alleviate it; William received her with kindness, presented her with the greatest part of her sister's jewels, and assigned her the palace of St. James for her residence.

This reconciliation was not very sincere on either side, but appearances were preserved. Anne and Lady Marlborough contented themselves with abusing William in their own circle, as a "Caliban," "a Dutch monster," &c.; and though these offensive and imprudent expressions were generally re-

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ported to the king by Lady Fitzharding, William calmly pursued his own plans, and treated this feminine vituperation with a magnanimous contempt; he even restored the Earl of Marlborough, whose gentleness and suavity formed the strongest contrast with the fiery and petulant temper of his wife, to some degree of favour. In the mean time the young Duke of Gloucester continued to improve in person and mind, and became the idol of the nation, as well as of his fond mother. When he was ten years old it was thought proper to take him out of the hands of his governess, Lady Fitzharding, and place him under the tuition of men. The king with some difficulty acceded to the earnest request of Anne, that Lord Marlborough might be appointed the governor of her darling son; his knowledge of the world, his integrity, and his courtly elegance of manner fitted him for this high charge, and his want of literature was not of much consequence. Bishop Burnet was selected as principal preceptor. Under these two celebrated men the young prince rapidly improved, and displayed a character and disposition manly beyond his years. The eyes of the people were turned on this boy, as on one destined to heal all differences, and prevent all national jealousies; they loved him, not only for what he was then, but all that they hoped he would become to them and to their children; they had "intrusted their futurity to him," and in the midst of these fond anticipations he was suddenly snatched from the world. He was seized with a fever in consequence of overheating himself with dancing on his birthday, which had been solemnized with the greatest splendour and festivity, and four days afterward he expired at Windsor, on the 24th of July, 1700, being just eleven years old.

The grief of this loss sank deep in Anne's maternal heart; he was the last of six children successively snatched from her, and though her sense

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of religion and her calm disposition prevented her from breaking out into any excess of affliction,* she never, even for years afterward, could allude to her son without melting into tears: and in her letters or notes to Lady Marlborough, she signs herself from this period, "*your poor, unfortunate,* faithful Morley."

There was, however, a strong party in the kingdom who openly exulted in the death of the prince, because it removed one obstacle to the restoration of James the Second. It is certain that the princess wrote to her father to announce the death of her son; and at the same time she respectfully inquired whether he would give her his sanction to accept the throne, which had been settled on her by the parliament? James replied by an absolute prohibition, charging her upon her allegiance, and as she valued her duty to him and to heaven, to do nothing contrary to the rights of her brother (afterward called the Pretender). This letter plunged Anne into such extreme dismay and perplexity, that when her father died some months afterward, at St. Germain's, it must have afforded great relief to her conscience. "Some natural tears she shed, but wiped them soon;" and her filial grief was speedily forgotten in the contemplation of her own high destinies. The health of King William was at this time fast declining; his death was hastened by a fall from his horse, in consequence of which he died, on the 8th of March, 1702, in the 52d year of his age. He was a great military commander rather than a great king, and utterly deficient in those amiable feelings and social accomplishments which render greatness attractive; he never could conciliate

* Bishop Burnet says, that "the queen attended on her son during his sickness with great tenderness, but with a grave composedness that *amazed all who saw it*, and that she bore his death with a resignation and piety which were *indeed very singular*." It must be confessed that the bishop has a very *singular* method of expressing himself at times.

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the love of the nation he had delivered, and was always unpopular. The horse on which he was mounted at the time of his accident had belonged to a man who had been executed for high-treason against him, which gave occasion to the credulous populace to suppose that the accident was some especial judgment of Providence.

On his death Anne was immediately proclaimed queen; her scruples, if she had any, were for the present laid aside. There was a ridiculous story current that the Pretender (who had been acknowledged King of England by Louis XIV.) was not really the son of James the Second, but a child who had been introduced into the palace in a warming-pan. Anne, to reconcile her conduct to herself or to her friends, affected at this time to give some credit to this tale, and doubt the legitimacy of her brother: the fact is, that she was placed in a very peculiar situation; if she had refused the crown, the Electress of Hanover would have been called over by one party, and the Pretender Prince James by another, and England would have been threatened by all the horrors of a civil war; she therefore acted for the best, and was guided by those around her.

To understand the following sketch of the great events of the reign of Anne, it will be necessary to recall to memory the situation of affairs at home and abroad at the period of her accession.

About this time, the people of England, Ireland, and Scotland, were divided into two great parties. One party maintained those principles through which the revolution of 1688 had been accomplished. They maintained, that a king ruled for the good of his subjects, and derived his power from them, and that by any illegal or oppressive conduct on the part of a king, his people were justified in dethroning him, and choosing another. They maintained that the reformed religion being the religion of the state, a Roman Catholic could not lawfully be placed

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at the head of the state: that James the Second had forfeited his rights to the throne, and that as his son could not inherit claims that were justly forfeited, he also was excluded by the voice of the nation in parliament: that the *Protestant succession* (that is, the succession of the House of Hanover, upon the death of Queen Anne) was authorized by the laws of the land. The persons who maintained these opinions were called *whigs*.

The contrary party maintained that the sovereign derived his power from God only, and not from the people: that to depose a king, however wicked, was in itself criminal, except when the religion of the state was endangered: that although the parliament might depose James the Second, it could not take from his family the hereditary and divine right of succession. They objected in general to the Brunswick family, and were supposed to be favourable to the exiled Stuarts. They detested the Presbyterians and Dissenters, and they feared the Roman Catholics; they identified the English church with the English government. People of this party were called *tories*.*

There were many truly honest and well informed men of both parties, for these were matters of prejudice and opinion; nor must it be forgotten, that though the words *whig* and *tory* are still used to distinguish two parties in the state, they have varied a good deal from their original signification in the reign of Anne.†

* The more inveterate and violent tories, who carried these principles to an extreme, and would be content with nothing less than the restoration of James the Second and his son, were called *Jacobites*, from Jacobus, the Latin for James.

† These two words had already been in use for thirty or forty years, but not generally, and were at first applied as terms of derision and reproach. "Whig-a-more was a nickname given to the western peasantry of Scotland, from their using the word frequently in driving strings of horses. Hence, as connected with Calvinistic doctrines in religion, and republican principles in policy, it was given as a term of reproach to the opposition party. In the latter years of Charles II.

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The leading men of the tory party were, the Dukes of Ormond, Shrewsbury, and Buckingham; Lord Bolingbroke, Harley (afterward Earl of Oxford), Hyde Earl of Rochester (uncle to the queen), and Bishop Atterbury. The leading whigs were, the Dukes of Argyle and Wharton; the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire, with all the Russells and Cavendishes; the Earl of Sunderland, Lord Somers, and Lord Halifax.

In the commencement of the reign of Anne, the Earl of Marlborough was a tory; but his wife became a whig, and, as a natural consequence, Marlborough was soon drawn over to that party. Admiral Churchill, his brother, was a violent tory; Lord Sunderland, his son-in-law, was a violent whig; Lady Tyrconnel, the sister of Lady Marlborough, was an enthusiastic Jacobite, and was at this time one of the court of the exiled king. This one instance will give some idea of the manner in which not only the nation but private families were divided by the spirit of faction.

Such was the political state of England at home. Abroad, our situation was most critical; we were on the brink of a terrible war, caused by the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth. The four great powers of Europe were at that time, France, England, Spain, and Austria. Russia scarcely ranked as a civilized nation, for the Czar Peter was running about Europe to educate himself, and study the arts of government and ship-building. It was the favourite plan of William the Third to preserve what is called in history the "balance of power;" that is, to prevent any one of the four great powers from obtaining such an exorbitant influence, or such an extension of territory, by encroachments on their weaker neighbours, as must endanger the free-

these retorted on the courtiers the word *tores*, signifying an Irish freebooter, as particularly applicable to the Roman Catholic followers of the Duke of York."—Scott's Edit. of Swift, vol. iii. p. 506.

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dom or existence of the others. Now Louis had just placed his grandson, Philip Duke of Anjou, on the throne of Spain, become vacant by the death of Charles the Second without heirs. In this he was opposed by the Emperor of Germany, who had claimed that crown for his second son, the Archduke Charles. It was clearly the interest of England to join the allies against the King of France; for Louis had refused to acknowledge the title of Anne, and had shown a determination to support and restore the son of James the Second. He was likewise so powerful and of such immeasurable ambition, that there was neither peace nor security for his neighbours; and should France and Spain be ever united under one king, it was evident that no single state could withstand such an overwhelming power. For these reasons it was determined to join the allies (that is, Germany, Holland, Portugal, and Savoy), against Louis the Fourteenth, and to espouse the part of the Archduke Charles against Philip the Fourth of Spain; thus, at the same time, war raged like a conflagration through all the fairest parts of Europe:—in Italy, between the French and Austrians; in the Netherlands, between France and the allies; in Spain, between Philip and Charles; and all this bloodshed and desolation were caused by the unreasonable ambition of one man.

Such was the state of things when Anne ascended the throne of England: at home a distracted and divided empire, and abroad the flame of war kindled from one end of Europe to the other. It was a crisis that demanded the vigilant, cautious policy, and the strong sagacious mind of an Elizabeth. Anne, a woman of weak and narrow understanding, whose whole range of ideas might have been brought within the circumference of her thimble, took up the sceptre as if it had been the badge of rank, not the ensign of power, and put on her crown as she would have put on her cap; she had some scruples about

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the justice of her title, but not a doubt about her fitness for the office; happily for herself, she could not feel or measure the whole extent of her own awful responsibility, else her weak and sensitive mind would have been crushed under the weight. She was a woman of a pacific, unaspiring disposition, and yet her reign was one long sanguinary war; and though not inclined to expense of any kind, and unostentatious to a degree of insipidity, more English treasure was lavished under her government than had ever been known before, and the state incurred debts which have not yet been repaid.

It was very natural and womanlike, that on her accession Anne's first thought should be to favour and elevate those she loved. Her husband, Prince George of Denmark, was appointed lord high admiral, and generalissimo of her forces by sea and land. The prince never showed the slightest disposition to interfere with the government. He was of an easy, indolent disposition, and "knew more than he could well express;"* for, though he could speak several languages, he spoke them all equally ill. He belonged to neither party, and appears to have been equally contemned by both. Anne wished to have associated him in the regal dignity and power, but this was not allowed, as being unconstitutional. The Earl of Marlborough was nominated captain-general of the English armies and master of the ordnance; and the queen's beloved friend, Lady Marlborough, was at the same time appointed mistress of the robes and keeper of the privy-purse: two offices of trust and honour requiring an almost constant attendance on the royal person, and thus gratifying at once Anne's fond affection and her favourite's utmost ambition. Remembering that she had heard the countess admire

* Burnet.

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the lodge in Windsor-park, Anne conferred on her the rangership and the lodge *for her life;* adding in her note on this occasion, "Any thing that is of so much satisfaction as this poor place seems to you, I would give dear Mrs. Freeman for all her days." Nor was this enough; Lady Marlborough's two daughters (Lady Harriet Godolphin, and the beautiful and amiable Lady Sunderland) were made ladies of the bedchamber, and Lord Godolphin (in opposition to the queen's own uncle, Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester) was made lord high treasurer, that is, prime minister. Almost all the persons forming Anne's first ministry were whigs or moderate tories.

These arrangements being completed, the queen was crowned at Westminster, on the 23d of April, 1702, with the usual formalities. Her husband merely walked in the procession as first prince of the blood; and among the young ladies who assisted the Duchess of Somerset in bearing the queen's train, we find Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterward the celebrated Lady M. W. Montague.

Immediately afterward (May 4th) war was declared against the French. The Earl of Marlborough was sent to take the command in the Netherlands; the Duke of Ormond and the Earl of Peterborough were intrusted with the armies sent into Spain, while Sir George Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovel commanded the fleet.

The first campaign in the Netherlands, though not distinguished by any great exploit, was very successful, and Marlborough on his return was created a duke. The Duke of Ormond and Sir George Rooke were also successful in Spain. At home the queen gained much popularity by two acts of beneficence: she yielded up 100,000*l.* a year in aid of the public service, and she gave up a large portion of the revenue derived from the church to the poorer clergy: this is since called "Queen Anne's Bounty."

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The following year (1703) Gibraltar was besieged and taken; and this strong fortress, which is of immense value in a commercial and military point of view, has ever since remained in the possession of the English. Marlborough was also, on the whole, very successful in the Netherlands, although no great battle or event occurred to distinguish this year.

In the winter the Archduke Charles, who had been proclaimed King of Spain by the title of Charles III., came to England, on his way to take possession, or rather to conquer (if he could) his new dominions. He was then eighteen; of a grave and modest deportment. The queen received him with great state at Windsor, and the nobility thronged to pay him attention, and to gaze upon him. He was dependent on the English for all his hopes of winning his kingdom, yet his deference towards the queen was marked with much dignity. It was observed that he never smiled once, yet had the art of seeming pleased with every thing, and of leaving a pleasing impression on everybody. This prince was afterward the father of Maria Theresa, the celebrated empress-queen.

Charles sailed from Portsmouth with 12,000 men, commanded by the brave and chivalrous, but eccentric Earl of Peterborough. They landed in Catalonia, and besieged Barcelona, which was taken by a singular exploit.* After this, a desperate struggle took place in the Peninsula between Philip the Fifth and Charles the Third. Twice did each of these rival kings enter Madrid in triumph. For seven or eight years a succession of dreadful battles desolated that beautiful and unhappy country, as during the peninsular war of our own time, but with a far different result. The English, under Lord Peterborough, greatly distinguished themselves; but in the end the

* Lord Peterborough, with 800 men, attacked and took by storm the fort of Montjoy, which was deemed impregnable, and had resisted 30,000 men for three months.

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party of Philip the Fifth began to prevail, while that of his competitor, though supported by the English, declined, and was at length overthrown.

Meantime the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough and his extraordinary successes made him the terror of the French and the wonder of all Europe. The Emperor of Germany being threatened in his own dominions, Marlborough advanced to his assistance at the head of his army, and was joined by Prince Eugene, who had hitherto commanded the Austrian armies in Italy. Any detailed account of the military achievements of these two celebrated generals would be impossible in this little work, and probably not very interesting or intelligible, even if it were possible; but one thing is well worth observing and remembering: Marlborough and Eugene were the two most famous commanders of that age; they were at the head of separate armies, which were destined to act in concert; they were both very ambitious of military glory, and it was a question which of the two was the greater general; yet from the moment they first met, we cannot discover that the slightest jealousy ever existed between them. They had too much real greatness of mind to be susceptible of this base passion. They admired, emulated, praised, and assisted each other. "The Prince Eugene and I will never differ about our share of laurels," said Marlborough, nobly, when they were put in comparison with each other. When a spiteful enemy said of Marlborough, that "He had *once* been fortunate," Eugene immediately replied, "That is the highest praise that could have been bestowed; for since Marlborough has been uniformly successful, and has only once been fortunate, it follows that all his other successes must have been owing to himself." To this union may be imputed their success, and consequently their fame; all their victories put together do them not so much *honour* as their

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magnanimous admiration and steady friendship for each other.

The battle of Blenheim (called in some histories the battle of Hochstadt) was fought on the 15th of August, 1704, between the allies under the command of Marlborough and Eugene, and the French, commanded by Marshal Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria. The allies obtained a complete victory. The French general-in-chief, about 1,200 officers, and 15,000 men were taken prisoners; 25,000 men, reckoning those on both sides, were left dead on the field. After this victory, Marlborough and Eugene distinguished themselves as much by their courtesy to the prisoners and their humanity to the wounded, as by their courage and skill during the conflict. Marlborough, on his return to England, presented his prisoner, Marshal Tallard, to the queen; he received the thanks of the two houses of parliament, and was presented with the manor of Woodstock, and a palace built at the national expense, now called Blenheim-park, in memory of the victory. Nothing very particular occurred in the beginning of 1706, except some signal triumphs in Spain, which had given a great check to Philip; but in the month of May, Marlborough gained another victory over the French at Ramilies, a little village in Brabant. The consequences of this victory were very important; many places, among which were Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, and Ostend, which had hitherto resisted or hesitated, now yielded to the allied army, and the best part of the French troops were destroyed. The intelligence was received in England with extreme exultation, except by those whose friends or relations had perished in the battle, and left them desolate. The name of Anne and that of her renowned general were everywhere mingled in shouts, in songs, and in loyal addresses; and the queen went in state to St. Paul's, to return thanks to God for

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these great successes, which were in fact more dazzling than substantial.

From these military affairs we must now turn to an event at home of far greater importance and more lasting consequences than any battle or campaign:—the union between England and Scotland, which was effected during the years 1704 and 1705. Although the two kingdoms had been united under the same sovereign since the time of James I. (1603), yet Scotland had a separate parliament and privy council. In the year 1706 the two governments were consolidated under one parliament, in which Scotland was represented by sixteen peers and forty-five commons; and in the same year the first British parliament assembled, and Anne thenceforward took the title of Queen of Great Britain: though this famous treaty was much opposed at the time, and excited great murmurs, it is now generally acknowledged to have been greatly beneficial to both kingdoms.

There was something very grand in the position of England at this period. Anne and her victorious general were exceedingly popular; the people paid the taxes cheerfully; commerce had greatly increased; the enormous sums of money sent out of the country to aid our allies, and the immense armies which took the field, filled other nations with astonishment at the magnitude of our wealth and resources, and the prowess and discipline of our soldiers. Louis the Fourteenth, hitherto the insolent arbiter of the world, trembled on his throne; and the very name of the English queen was pronounced with respect from one end of Europe to the other.

Anne at this time must have wondered at herself in the midst of all this blaze of glory; but it does not seem to have changed her disposition, or to have drawn forth any expression of feeling or exultation, or gratitude, or humility, beyond what the decorum of her situation required. She went through all the

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usual forms of government very quietly and creditably; read her speeches to the parliament, duly at the opening and close of each session, and signed the papers laid before her. Her domestic life was blameless, but insipid; her amusements of the most trifling character; she was very exact in her court etiquette; and such an observer of mere forms and ceremonies, "that she would often descend so low as to remark in her domestics of either sex, who came into her presence, whether a ruffle, a periwig, or the lining of a coat were unsuitable at certain times."* She resided with her husband and intimates, sometimes at Windsor, sometimes at Kensington; but appears to have preferred Hampton Court to either: and there, to use Pope's expression, "she sometimes counsel took—and sometimes tea." But a great and serious change was, in the mean time, gradually taking place in her private sentiments and her household arrangements, which had the most important influence on public affairs. Anne had not a mind sufficiently enlarged to rise superior to her personal antipathies and partialities; and, woman-like more than queen-like, she carried them always about her, even into the councils of the nation. From the very commencement of her reign, the influence of her favourite, the Duchess of Marlborough, had begun to decline; she daily lost her hold on the queen's affections, but by such imperceptible gradations, and from such trifling causes, that Anne was at first as unconscious, as the high-spirited duchess herself was unsuspecting, of such a change. The first estrangement began in political differences. The duchess favoured the whigs; the queen in her heart was inclined to the tories: thence arose altercations and remonstrances, which became, by recurrence, more bitter and violent. The duchess, presuming on her power and her husband's splendid successes, was contradictory and overbearing. She

* Swift.

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had great talents, and had long exercised over the mind of Anne the same sorcery which Leonora Galigai exercised over Mary de' Medici, "the ascendency of a strong mind over a weak one;" but she abused her power, and was too haughty to take care of it. She had an ungovernable temper, which she had never restrained towards her husband, her children, or her household; and now, by long indulgence and increasing age, this vice had grown upon her, till she seemed absolutely to have lost the power to command herself even in the presence of her queen and mistress. Anne, unable to contend against her, feared when she had ceased to love her, and opposed craft, and obstinacy, and dissimulation to the fierce sallies of passion and sarcastic bitterness of wit with which the duchess frequently combated her views and opinions.

About the year 1707, the Duchess of Marlborough had introduced into the household of the queen a poor relation of her family, who was appointed bedchamber-woman. The name of this person was Abigail Hill, but she is better known in history as Mrs. Masham, being soon after married to Masham, one of the pages at court. Though bound to the duchess by many ties of gratitude, this woman did not scruple to supplant her benefactress. She became the confidant of the vexation and impatience to which Anne, when relieved from the presence of her haughty favourite, gave way: she admitted to secret consultations with the queen those who were intriguing to remove the Duke of Marlborough and his adherents, and prepare the way for a change of ministers more suitable to the temper of the queen. Harley and St. John, two ambitious and subtle men, had gained over the bedchamber-woman, and through her influence they secretly and gradually obtained a power which subverted the favour of the duchess, overthrew Marlborough at the head of his vast armies, and rendered his victories useless.

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When the duchess discovered, to her unspeakable astonishment, the influence of "a creature" whom she had hitherto considered with a sort of contemptuous pity, but who supplied by obsequious attention and good-humour the want of talents, she was furious. She demanded of the queen that Mrs. Masham should be dismissed; and when Anne evaded this insolent request, she persecuted the poor queen with continual complaints and remonstrances, appeals to their former friendship, and complaints of present coldness and ingratitude; as if aversion could have been talked away, and affection scolded back!

While things were in this situation at home, the Duke of Marlborough was pursuing his successes abroad, and the pride of Louis was everywhere humbled: one or two victories which his generals gained in Spain, particularly the battle of Almanza, where Lord Peterborough was completely defeated, a little revived his drooping spirits; but he lost ground daily, and the English seized on the Mediterranean islands.

In the battle of Oudenarde, Marlborough and Prince Eugene were again victorious; this battle, which almost annihilated the French power in the Netherlands, was fought on the 11th of July, 1708; the carnage was not so great as in some of the other battles, but still it was dreadful. The news of the battle was received in England with great exultation; the queen wrote a gracious letter to the Duke of Marlborough, and there was a public thanksgiving at St. Paul's, to which the queen went in state. The Duchess of Marlborough, as mistress of the robes, was in the same carriage with the sovereign, and as the cavalcade moved slowly along, hailed by the shouts and huzzas of the multitude, the queen was tormented all the way by the taunts and jealous complaints of the duchess, because her majesty had not chosen to wear her jewels as she had arranged

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them. She ascribed this to unkindness, and to the interference of Mrs. Masham; and thus did this indiscreet and passionate woman aggravate at every opportunity the disgust and displeasure of the queen. Soon after the ceremony she sought an interview, in which she continued the same tone of insolent invective: the altercation became so violent, that the loud voice of the duchess was heard in the antechamber; and when she came out, her eyes were suffused with tears: the queen was found in a similar state of agitation, and the breach had now become incurable.

At this period the queen was thrown into great agitation, by a proposal among the whigs to invite over the Electoral Prince of Hanover, the heir presumptive to the crown, and allow him to take his seat in the parliament as Duke of Cambridge. She was alarmed—she felt herself insulted; "It is a thing," said she, in a letter to Marlborough, "that I cannot bear, to have my successor here, though but for a week." By Marlborough's interference she was spared this mortification; but her hatred to the whigs was increased. She was obliged to make concessions to them, because otherwise Marlborough would have thrown up his command; but therefore she only hated them the more, and particularly the duchess, who had long been the moving principle of that party. By her husband's advice she now absented herself entirely from court, and went down into the country, to fret and brood over all the angry and bitter feelings that wait on mortified pride, wounded affection, and exasperated temper.

In the midst of these perplexities Anne lost the small degree of support and comfort she might have derived from her husband. Prince George of Denmark had never enjoyed the slightest consideration on his own account, and his death was scarcely felt or noticed beyond the circle of the court; but to Anne it was a deep affliction; she watched him in

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his last illness with all the tenderness of a wife, and all the solicitude of a nurse; she sat up with him for six nights; at length he sank under his disorder, which was a confirmed asthma, and expired at Kensington-palace in October, 1709.

The Duchess of Marlborough was at Windsor when the tidings of the prince's danger reached her. To do her justice, this woman, with her talents, her spirit, her generosity, her frankness, her really warm affections, would have been a noble creature, but for the chief vice of her character—that proud, ungovernable temper, which at times converted her into a fury, rendered her good qualities useless, and aggravated all her faults. On hearing of the danger of Prince George, she wrote the following note to the queen:—

"Though the last time I had the honour to wait on your majesty, your usage of me was such, as was scarce possible for me to imagine, or for anybody to believe; yet I cannot hear of so great a misfortune and affliction to you, as the condition in which the prince is, without coming to pay my duty and inquiring after your health; and to see if in any particular whatsoever, my service can either be agreeable or useful to you: for which satisfaction I would do more than I would trouble your majesty to read at this time."

This note is very characteristic: a woman of a gentler spirit would, at such a moment, have spared the reproach at the commencement; a woman of less heart—such a woman as Queen Anne herself, "content to dwell in decencies for ever,"—would have finished her game at cards, and never have thought of writing at all. The duchess, after despatching a messenger with his billet, ordered her carriage at midnight, and reached Kensington-palace the next morning.

While Anne was watching by her husband's sick-bed, she was surprised by a note from the Duchess

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of Marlborough, entreating admission: the queen consented, but received her coolly; even in that moment the feeling of aversion was uppermost in her mind. But the duchess, whose attachments were as strong as her temper was violent, and whose best feelings were roused, would not be repelled. She remained with her, supported her through this sad scene, and when the prince had breathed his last, she tenderly removed her royal mistress from the chamber of death, led her from the gaze of the surrounding attendants into her closet, and there, kneeling down at her feet, soothed her with the most affectionate expressions, till the first burst of agony was over. She then entreated her to remove to St. James's, and leave a place which was no longer a fit residence for her, and where every object only added to the poignancy of her sorrow; she offered her own carriage to convey her thither at the instant, and at length prevailed. The queen, then giving her watch to the duchess, desired her to retire till the hand had reached a certain point, and to send Mrs. Masham to her. The duchess, stung to the soul, retired; she had not sufficient command over her feelings or her temper to send in the favourite, who at such a moment was preferred to herself; but on returning merely said, "Your majesty may send for Mrs. Masham at St. James's when and how you please:" the queen said no more on the subject, but Mrs. Masham was at St. James's ready to receive her; and the duchess, by this sacrifice of her pride to her affection, gained nothing, apparently, but added pain and mortification.

In the next two years (1709 and 1710) we find Louis the Fourteenth reduced almost to despair. This wretched old man, who had begun his reign with such unexampled splendour, was now by his own ambition and arrogance fallen so low, as to sue for the peace he might once have dictated; but it was refused, except on terms to which he would

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not accede. The war continued to rage abroad, while the queen, occupied with petty intrigues at home, was contriving with Harley and Mrs. Masham the means of removing a ministry that she at once feared and detested; but under whose auspices England had certainly reached a height of power and glory almost unequalled in history. Lord Sunderland, who was now secretary of state, she regarded with a species of antipathy; he was at the head of the whigs, and he was the Duchess of Marlborough's favourite son-in-law.

The measures prepared and concerted for disgracing the ministry were retarded for a while by another great victory gained by Marlborough and Prince Eugene over the French at Malplaquet, September 11, 1709. The two armies met on a plain to the south of Mons, a large town in Flanders; they were nearly equal, consisting each of about 120,000 men, and the French were commanded by Marshal Villars, the greatest of all their generals. In this "*very murdering battle*," as Marlborough truly called it in his letters, about 20,000 men fell on the side of the allies, and near 14,000 of the French, who were defeated. The queen's brother, the Chevalier St. George, who fought on the side of the French, was desperately wounded. Marlborough displayed his usual humanity after the battle, and did all in his power to alleviate the horrible sufferings of the wounded. About 3000 of these miserable wretches lay mangled in the neighbouring woods, and were sought out and immediately relieved by the English general, whose compassion after a battle extended equally to friends and enemies. Nor was it only the soldiers opposed in deadly combat who were to be pitied. What crimes, what disease, what public and private misery, what wretchedness and desolation were spread through that once fertile and happy country which had become the seat of war—where death and suffering, not in

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one, but in a thousand horrid forms, were loosed abroad! The greatest part of the Netherlands lay wasted by pestilence and famine. "It is impossible," writes the victorious general to his wife, "to be sensible of the misery of this country without seeing it; at least one-half of the people in the villages, since the beginning of last winter, are dead, and the rest look as if they came out of their graves." He says in another place, "The misery of these poor people is such, one must be a brute not to pity them." Can we read of these things, and yet suffer ourselves to be dazzled by the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of *glorious* war?"*

If Marlborough hoped that this victory would reinstate him in his favour at court, or purchase a speedy and advantageous peace, he was in both respects deceived. All that he gained abroad his duchess was losing at home, by her jealous pride and her tempestuous passions. In vain her husband remonstrated in the strongest terms he could use without bringing down a storm upon his own head, and warned her against the consequences of her indiscretion. He said very sensibly, "It has always been my observation in disputes, especially in those of kindness and friendship, that all reproaches, though ever so reasonable, do serve to no other end but to make the breach the wider;" any-

* See also the account of the siege of Tournay, in this campaign (1709), where an appalling subterraneous war was carried on in the mines, the most horrible that imagination can conceive. The miners frequently met and fought with each other in the dark; sometimes the troops, mistaking friend for foe, killed their own comrades; sometimes whole companies entered the mines when they were ready primed for explosion. Hundreds of men were stifled together, inundated with water, suffocated with smoke, or buried alive in the cavities, and left to perish by degrees—a death the thought shrinks from. On some occasions, whole battalions were blown up into the air, and their limbs scattered to a distance, like lava from a volcano. It was more like a contest of fiends carried on in an infernal labyrinth, than the combat of men and soldiers; and let it be remembered, this is only a passing, partial glimpse of a picture which, if it could be spread out before us at once in all the strong colouring of reality, would appal the most unfeeling, and fill the tender-hearted with pity and horror.

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body, when cool, would confess the truth of this. But some demon of fury and indiscretion seemed to have possessed the Duchess of Marlborough, and blinded her to consequences. When once the queen had said in her calm, cool manner, "It is impossible for you to recover my former kindness; but I shall behave myself to you as the Duke of Marlborough's wife, and my groom of the stole," dignified retirement and silent submission, were all that were left to the duchess: but this strange, unreasonable woman sent the queen a long list of all her own merits and services, and claims on the royal gratitude, accompanied by the "Whole Duty of Man," with the page doubled down at the chapter on friendship, and extracts out of sermons! Anne could not cope with her discarded favourite in eloquence and violence, but she could resist and dissemble; above all, she could hold her tongue. In a few weeks, all the measures so long prepared became known, and the disgrace of Marlborough, and the change of administration, were openly talked of and discussed. The duchess had gone down into the country, and was trying to keep herself quiet, but hearing that she had been accused of speaking disrespectfully of the queen, she came posting up to town in a fresh transport of indignation. Besides being from her hasty temper her own worst enemy, she had made herself many other enemies, by her turn for satire and ridicule, and her severe wit. She excelled, it is said, "in exposing knaves, and painting fools," and the knaves and the fools were now too strong for her. She drove to Kensington, where she forced herself into the queen's presence, and desired to know who had charged her with saying any thing disrespectful, and what she was accused of. The queen had armed herself against this crisis in sullen silence and endurance; and to the eloquent vindication and passionate questions of the duchess, she merely replied, that she would give her no answer. In vain

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the duchess entreated, remonstrated, appealed to her justice, to her kindness, to her compassion; the queen moved towards the door, repeating, with the same sullen determination, "I shall make no answer to any thing you say." The duchess burst into tears of mingled rage and feeling, and then went on with the same volubility. The queen replied precisely in the same words and tone, "You shall have no answer." The duchess then exclaimed, with offensive violence, "I am confident you will suffer in this world or the next for so much inhumanity." The queen immediately left the room, saying, as she shut the door, "That is my business." The duchess, in an agony of rage, humiliation, and wounded affection, withdrew; she sat down in the gallery, to wipe away her tears, and again returning to the door of the queen's closet, she said that she would refrain from going to the lodge at Windsor, if her majesty *would not be easy to see her*. The queen replied, "You may, if you please, come to the castle; it will give me no uneasiness." The duchess then left the palace; they met no more, and thus ended this memorable friendship, which, from the first, unequal and ill-founded, did not deserve to last, and with it ended the ministry, and with the ministry the war.

A series of disputes and intrigues ensued, and several minor events, among which was the trial of Dr. Sacheverel for preaching a seditious sermon, a circumstance unimportant in itself, but which was made to serve the purposes of a faction, and to inflame the populace almost to phrensy. Never, perhaps, did party spirit rage in a manner at once so disgraceful, so vicious, and so ludicrous. It was not the strife of principles; it was not, like the civil wars of the preceding century, a grand struggle between liberty and despotism;—it was a vile spirit of faction, which had filled the nation with spleen and rancour, and extinguished all the seeds of good

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nature, compassion, and humanity; which had affected at once the morals and the common sense of the people, and even interfered with the administration of justice. The women, instead of tempering the animosities of the time, blew up the flame of discord. Addison, in some of the most elegant papers of the "Spectator," attempted to mitigate this evil spirit. He attacked the men with grave humour and graver argument; he endeavoured to bring back the women to the decorum and reserve of their sex by the most exquisite raillery, that delicate mixture of satire and compliment in which he excelled; he reminded these "petticoat politicians" and viragoes of the tea-table that party spirit was in its nature a male vice, made up of many angry passions, which were altogether repugnant to the softness, modesty, and other endearing qualities proper to their sex. He assured them there was nothing so injurious to a pretty face as party zeal; that he had never known a party woman who kept her beauty for a twelvemonth; and he conjured them, as they valued their complexions, to abstain from all disputes of this nature. Every one will recollect the admirable description of the whig ladies and the tory ladies drawn up in battle array at the Opera, and patched, by way of distinction, on opposite sides of the face; the perplexity of the whig beauty, who had a mole on the tory side of her forehead, which exposed her to the imputation of having gone over to the enemy; and the despair of the tory partisan, whom an unlucky pimple had reduced to the necessity of applying a patch to the wrong side of her face. But it was all in vain; a transient smile might have been excited at such palpable absurdity; some partial good was perhaps effected; but fashion and faction were far too strong to be acted upon by wit, or argument, or eloquence, or satire. At a time when a low-bred, artful, ignorant bedchamber-woman, with no more sense than would have sufficed to smooth

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propriety seemed alike to forbid it, is marvellous; but pride will stoop to strange meanness. Perhaps she wished to torment the queen; perhaps to conceal from the public the full extent of her disgrace. At all events, she waited till she was compelled to resign it, and until, to exhibit the climax of court degradation, her husband had fallen on his knees before Anne, to entreat her to spare her former friend this last and deepest mortification,—and kneeled in vain! Anne possessed in a superlative degree that obstinacy of temper which is said to have been the vice and the destruction of all the Stuart race. When Marlborough pleaded for a short delay (only a few weeks), she answered by demanding the key in three days; when he expostulated farther, she limited the time to two. He quitted her in despair. The same evening the duchess sent him back with the key. Anne, taken by surprise at his reappearance, and equally destitute of native dignity and presence of mind, could only stammer an unintelligible reply as she took it from him. He bowed and withdrew. Why he did not at the same time resign all his own offices appears singular; but, from some motives not satisfactorily explained, he retained them. He waited, as his wife had done, to be discharged like a supernumerary servant. His fall was already decreed, and, after another short but successful campaign in Holland, he appeared at court, and, to use the words of Swift, "no one spoke to him." The next day he was dismissed from all his employments on charges of peculation and abuse of the public money, some of which were false, and some exaggerated. It is well known that the Duke of Marlborough's reigning foible was the love of money, and that his courtesy was tinged with duplicity; but it must also be acknowledged that he was a great, an illustrious, and in many respects a good man.

The duke and duchess afterward went abroad, and

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their history is not further connected with that of Anne. The duke bore his disgrace with mildness and dignity; not so his turbulent, impetuous wife. Stung in every feeling, and incapable of self-command, she descended to every vulgar excess of insolence and spite. No loss of court favour could have so degraded her as she afterward degraded herself. She threatened to publish the private and confidential letters which the queen had written to her in the days of their early fondness; and this threat she partly executed, but not till after the death of Anne. She had a beautiful little portrait of the queen in enamel, and set round with brilliants, one of Anne's first gifts to her. She took it out of the setting, and gave it to an old woman known about the court as a dealer in fans, toys, old china, &c., with permission to sell it for any thing she could get for it; and it was disposed of for ten pounds.* Many other instances of her paltry malice and furious temper are recorded; but it is painful to multiply these anecdotes, or to dwell longer upon such an exhibition of meanness, heartlessness, and duplicity on one side, and pride, passion, and selfishness on the other.†

The two principal men of the new ministry were Harley, now Earl of Oxford, created high treasurer, and the famous St. John, Lord Bolingbroke. The

* Swift's Works.—Journal to Stella.

† The Duchess of Marlborough died in 1744. So little do people know themselves, at least those in whom worldly pride and temper obscure the power of self-judgment, that this woman, who had tormented her husband, whom she adored, and alienated her children and her grandchildren,—who would hardly suffer those around her to draw their breath but by her will,—whose life was one long warfare upon earth,—a species of female salamander, who lived in the very elements of contention,—

> By spirit robb'd of power, by warmth of friends,
> By wealth of followers,—

went down to the grave complaining that all the people in the world were so disagreeable, she had never found any thing to love. It is impossible to deny that she had some fine qualities; but she had three faults, which, when found together, are enough to convert a woman into a demon,—ambition, avarice, and ill-temper.

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Duke of Ormond succeeded the Duke of Marlborough as commander of the forces, and under these auspices a peace was effected,—the famous peace of Utrecht, signed in the beginning of 1713. It is the opinion of great statesmen that this treaty was very disgraceful to England. Doubtless it was right to put an end to the horrors of war, only justifiable as long as inevitable, and it was generous to grant favourable terms to a prostrate enemy; but after fourteen or fifteen years of battle, and fierce struggles, and victories purchased by such enormous cost of blood and treasure, to make peace on terms no better than might have been procured before, by the abandonment of our allies, and by the violation of every principle upon which the war was first undertaken, seems rather lamentable and foolish, and not a little dishonourable and treacherous.

Philip the Fifth was settled on the throne of Spain; Charles, his competitor, became, by the death of his brother, Emperor of Germany. Anne was acknowledged by Louis as Queen of England, and the Pretender abjured. The arrangements for our commerce were considered so unfavourable to the country, that when the peace was proclaimed, it was amid mingled shouts and execrations. It was regarded at the time not so much as a concern of national and public interest as a mere party affair, which the tories were bound to support, and the whigs equally bound to detest.

The rest of Queen Anne's reign exhibits nothing to interest;—it was inglorious, but peaceful. The tory party, into whose hands she had fallen, infused into her mind many conscientious scruples about retaining the sovereignty, to the exclusion of her brother; scruples which she dared not avow: and when the parliament addressed her on the subject of the Pretender, who had threatened to invade England, and proposed that a price should be set on his head, she was compelled to thank "her faithful Commons"

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for their obliging care, while her real sentiments were precisely the contrary. She doubted her own rights, she believed in those of her brother, and she cordially detested the Brunswick family and her destined successor. With these sentiments, the plain path of duty was before her—she ought to have ceased to wear the crown;* but it required far more magnanimity than she possessed to resign it; and such a step would certainly have caused great confusion in the kingdom. She continued, therefore, to reign, and tried to temporize with her conscience by indulging the idea that her brother would eventually be restored after her death. On the disgrace of the Duchess of Marlborough the Duchess of Somerset was appointed groom of the stole, and Lady Masham keeper of the privy purse. These two women enjoyed the greatest influence with Anne during the remainder of her life. The duchess was a woman of illustrious family; proud, but well-meaning; as remarkable for her knowledge of court etiquette, and her exact observance of forms, as the frank and fiery-spirited Duchess of Marlborough had been for her negligence, or rather her defiance of both; she favoured the whig party. Lady Masham, on the contrary, was in the interest of the banished Stuarts: that is, a jacobite. Anne had all the jealousy of power and fear of being governed natural to a mind consciously weak, and both had been increased by her connexion with the Duchess of Marlborough. "Often, out of fear of being imposed upon, by an over-caution, she would impose upon herself; she took a delight in refusing those who were thought to have the greatest power with her, even in the most

* It is said that she really did entertain the idea of ceding the crown to her brother, and consulted Bishop Wilkins (called the Prophet) to know what would be the consequence of such a step; he replied, "Madam, you would be in the Tower in a month, and dead in three." This answer, dictated by common sense, her majesty took for inspiration, and dropped all thoughts of resigning the crown.—Vide Walpole's Reminiscences.

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reasonable things, and such as were necessary for her service, nor would let them be done till she fell into the humour of it herself."*

She now with petty cunning contrived to balance her two favourites against each other, by first inclining to the one and then to the other; and the effect of this management was to increase her own perplexities, by keeping her councils in perpetual fluctuation; her days were vexed and imbittered by the dissensions of her parliament and the animosities of her ministers. She had no resources within herself which might have rendered her burthen tolerable: to this may be attributed the disgraceful habits into which she fell latterly, and which, though indulged cautiously and in private, assisted in undermining her health and further weakened her intellects.

Although Anne in her best days was merely a dull, uninformed woman, without activity of mind, and without the slightest taste for literature or the arts, yet her reign is celebrated, as exhibiting an assemblage of remarkable men, all living about the same period; and we speak habitually of the "wits of Queen Anne's time," as we do of the "poets of the Elizabethan age." The wits of Queen Anne were Pope, Swift, Gay, Prior, Arbuthnot; Addison and Steele; Congreve, Parnell, Granville (afterward Lord Lansdown), and Bishop Atterbury.

Of these celebrated men it may be observed, that some were pensioned and some were patronised by her ministers, and repaid this patronage by adulation, which has sometimes degraded the wit and poet, while it immortalized the patron. Such men, for instance, as Secretary Craggs and Lord Halifax,† owe more to Pope and Prior than the poets ever

* Swift's Last Years of Queen Anne.

† The Earl of Halifax was elevated into very undeserved distinction by his poetical flatterers and satirists. He became the Mæcenas of his time at very small cost; "fed with soft dedication all day long," he gave in return only good words and good dinners.

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owed to them. Not one of the men above enumerated was personally distinguished by Anne herself:* it may be doubted whether she ever read the Rape of the Lock, which was published about three years before her death. Pope also produced during her reign the Messiah, the Temple of Fame, Windsor Forest, &c., and began the translation of the Iliad, which was published in the following reign.

But the men whose writings produced the most immediate and important influence on their own times were Swift, Addison, and Steele. Swift was then chiefly known as a party-writer and satirist on the tory side, and as the creature of Harley and Bolingbroke. Addison and Steele were whigs, and wrote under the patronage of Marlborough and Halifax. The Tatler was commenced by Steele in April, 1709, and carried on, in conjunction with Addison, till March, 1711. Two months afterward appeared the first number of the Spectator, which was likewise carried on for about two years.

These two celebrated works exercised an influence over the manners and morals of that time which we can scarcely estimate in these days but by a reference to contemporary works. In the Tatler Steele maintained an unwearied and successful warfare against infidelity, gambling, duelling, drinking, swearing; vices which, since the days of Charles the Second, had been *fashionable* in the highest society. He was the first who armed wit and satire on the side of religion, virtue, and decorum;† who made impudence appear vulgar, and ignorance ridiculous. Under the influence of his elegant and good-humoured admonitions, and exquisite raillery, the conversation and amusements of the women became less frivolous,

* Except Arbuthnot, who was the court physician.

† This is spoken generally: there is one paper in the Tatler in which the satire is cruel and personal, and virtue placed in a ridiculous point of view. It is written by Swift, with all his peculiar talent, humour, and coarseness of feeling.

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those of the men less gross; while Addison, by many beautiful papers in the Spectator, particularly those on the Paradise Lost, on Chevy Chase, and the old ballads; on picturesque gardening (till then unknown, except in Milton's poetry); on true and false wit; on the tragedies and operas of the time, prepared the way for a better taste in art and in criticism than had yet prevailed; rendered literature more popular; and even made fine ladies and beaux look to their orthography.

The Spectator and Tatler are not so generally read now as they were forty or fifty years ago; on all points of information, taste, and criticism they have been superseded or become antiquated;—we have a new era in literature, and unbounded liberty of conscience in criticism; it is no longer heresy to differ from Addison, nor is the fiat of Dr. Johnson like the law of the Medes and the Persians. It must be confessed, too, that the subject and style of many of these papers, which were then to be found on the toilet or tea-table of every lady, old and young, married or unmarried, would not be tolerated in these days of refinement. It is there, however, we must look to see reflected, as in a sparkling mirror, the very age and body of that time; we have ceased to consult the Tatler and Spectator as guides in morality or criticism; but as pictures of manners and costume they are ever rich in amusement and information.—It is here we find chronicled in all their importance the tremendous periwigs and red-heeled shoes of the gentlemen, and the expansive hoops and flame-coloured hoods of the ladies. What can be more admirable in their way, or convey a more lively idea of the manners and information of the women than the papers on the exercises of the fan, the catalogue of Leonora's library, and the account of the boarding-school for teaching parrots to speak civilly and grammatically? Yet the decrees of the Spectator were not always infallible: his denuncia-

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tions against operas and riding-habits (then a new and terrible innovation) remind us of Madame de Sevigné's prophecy, that coffee and Racine "would be forgotten together."

It is worth while to remark, that a taste for the opera and Italian music began to be fashionable in Anne's time. I use the word *fashionable*, for it was at first considered as a species of affectation, and ridiculed as such by Swift and other wits. In the first opera (Arsinoe) which was publicly performed, in 1704, they had only English singers, who sang in their native language. When Valentini, Nicolini, and La Margarita, the first Italian opera-singers, came over, they sang their parts in Italian, while the rest of the *dramatis personæ* sang in English. This strange absurdity was endured for several seasons. It was not till the beginning of 1710 that an opera was performed wholly in Italian and by Italian singers; it was entitled "Almahide," but the name of the composer is not known. In the same year occurred the great musical event of Anne's reign—the arrival of Handel, and the representation of his first opera, the "Rinaldo."

The only eminent painter of Queen Anne's time was Sir Godfrey Kneller; he was merely a portrait-painter, and does not rank high in his art. Sir Christopher Wren and Sir John Vanburgh were the principal architects; both were men of original genius, and the latter a dramatic writer and a wit, as well as a first-rate artist.

After the peace of Utrecht the reign of Anne offers little to interest. It is now very well known that she changed her ministry, and signed this famous treaty with a hope of restoring her brother, the Pretender, to the English throne, though one of the principal articles stipulated his banishment from France; and at the very time that the proclamation was in force offering a reward for his head, she received him secretly in her closet, by the connivance of Har-

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ley and Mrs. Masham. Who would severely blame Anne for this political duplicity? We can but pity a kind-hearted and conscientious woman placed by her evil stars in a situation which made the indulgence of natural affections and generous feelings, not only illegal, but criminal; involving a breach of the laws she had herself promulgated, and of the oaths she had solemnly sworn; compromising at the same time her kingdom's peace, her people's freedom, and her own truth and honour.

Towards the close of her life the queen suffered much from continual attacks of the gout, and her disorder was increased by the necessity of attending the privy councils, where, the ministers being divided, there was nothing but murmuring, altercation, and discontent. These disputes and intrigues were the more disgusting, because we cannot trace the least appearance of patriotism and public spirit in any of the statesmen who surrounded Anne at this time. The Duke of Ormond appears to have been the most honest, and Bolingbroke the most able; but it was a continual scene of paltry struggles for office and power, mixed up with the vilest party spirit and the most barefaced self-interest.

In the year 1714 the Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover, who had been declared the heiress to these kingdoms, died suddenly while walking in the garden of her palace: she was a woman of uncommon capacity and spirit; and, though nearly eighty, had looked forward to the English throne. She had often declared that she should die content if she could live to have inscribed on her tomb—"Sophia, Queen of Great Britain." On her death her son George of Brunswick became the heir-apparent to the British crown.

The queen's health continued to decline, and her situation among the turbulent, intriguing men around her appears very pitiable. The disputes between Oxford and Bolingbroke became so violent, that not

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even her presence as a lady and their sovereign could restrain them within the bounds of decorum. Lord Oxford at length suddenly resigned his office of treasurer; there was a privy council held in consequence, which lasted till two o'clock in the morning, and so agitated and fatigued the poor queen, that she declared she could not survive it: this was on the 29th of July; soon afterward she was seized with a kind of apoplexy, of which, after lingering almost insensible for two days, she expired on the 1st of August, 1714, in the 50th year of her age: she had reigned twelve years and four months.

Queen Anne had been rather handsome in her youth; her features were regular, and her figure well proportioned, but her countenance was without interest and her deportment without dignity. If she had lived in a private station she would have passed through the world as an amiable woman; and if the same qualities which make a good housewife would have made an efficient sovereign, she would have been exemplary. Those about her were aware of her mental deficiencies; they supplied or concealed them, and availed themselves of her weakness for their own purposes. The people at large beheld her from a distance: they regarded her with affection and reverence, as an amiable wife and mother, and a strict Protestant, who protected them from the horrors of French invasion, pretenders, popery, and wooden shoes, all of which were mixed up together in the popular imagination. They loved her for her gracious manners, her blameless life, and her merciful sway: and her subjects of all parties united in giving her the appellation of "Good Queen Anne;" but history will pause before it ratifies that most expressive and comprehensive title.

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MARIA THERESA,

EMPRESS OF GERMANY AND QUEEN OF HUNGARY.

Maria Theresa succeeded to the vast hereditary possessions of the house of Austria, by the conditions of a famous treaty, called in history the Pragmatic Sanction. By this political instrument the usual course of succession in families was set aside: and as it subsequently involved in its consequences, not only the fate of Maria Theresa, but the destinies of Europe, it is necessary to have a clear idea of its origin and intention, before we can fully understand the situation of this queen in the commencement of her reign.

Though the title of the Emperor of Germany was by the constitution of the empire elective, yet the imperial dignity had remained in the house of Hapsburgh for upwards of four centuries. Joseph the First died in 1711, leaving two daughters in their minority. He bequeathed the Austrian dominions to his brother, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, on condition that if the latter had no son to inherit the throne, then the daughters of Joseph were to succeed in preference to the daughters of Charles: this arrangement, which had been solemnly signed and ratified by the two brothers, in presence of their father, Leopold the First, was called the Family Compact. It happened that Charles the Sixth had only one son, who died in his infancy. Two daughters survived, in whom the emperor concentrated his affections and his ambition. It now became his favourite plan to set aside the Family Compact, and to transfer the right of succession from his two nieces to his own

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daughters. For this purpose he framed the treaty entitled the Pragmatic Sanction, and to secure its fulfilment, either by negotiation or force of arms, became henceforth the object of his life. It was guarantied successively by Spain, England, Prussia, Russia, and Holland. Among the minor states of Germany it met with more opposition; the Elector of Bavaria, who had married the eldest daughter of the late Emperor Joseph, and the Elector of Saxony, who had espoused the youngest, were naturally averse to an arrangement so contrary to their interests: at length, however, all obstacles were overcome; the Family Compact was annulled, and the Pragmatic Sanction, declaring Maria Theresa the heiress of the house of Austria, was finally ratified.

The woman for whose sake her father had prevailed on all Europe to sanction a violation of a solemn engagement was at least not unworthy of the throne to which she was destined. The virtues and talents of Maria Theresa, and the splendid part she played on the theatre of Europe for forty years, render her a fair example of what a woman, gifted with a good understanding, and actuated by amiable impulses, may become, at the head of a mighty empire; of all that she may achieve for the good of others, and all that she must risk or resign of virtue and happiness in herself.

Maria Theresa of Austria was born at Vienna on the 13th of May, 1717, and received at her baptism the names of Maria-Theresa-Valperga-Amelia-Christina. Her father, Charles the Sixth, was a man of a slow and phlegmatic temper, a narrow capacity, and a grave and formal deportment: he was seldom seen to smile, and was only once known to laugh. He attached the most extraordinary importance to the observance of courtly etiquette, yet was not without good sense, and the capability of strong domestic affections: he appears, however, to have had but two passions—hunting and music: he was him-

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self an amateur composer, and found time to write an opera, which was performed with great splendour in the theatre of his palace. The imperial musician presided in his own orchestra, and his two daughters, Maria Theresa and Maria Anne, danced in the ballet. His passion for this amusement was indulged at a considerable expense to the state; for Lady M. W. Montagu mentions an opera which she saw at Vienna in 1716, of which the decorations and dresses cost the emperor thirty thousand pounds. We might be inclined to pardon this extravagance, recollecting that we perhaps owe to Charles the Sixth the finest works of Metastasio, whom he called from Italy to compose the operas for his court; but all the rewards bestowed on the poet during fifty years of service did not amount to the sums lavished on the gorgeous and tasteless decorations of this single opera. It should not be omitted, while speaking of the character of Charles, that he was remarkable for a compassionate and benevolent disposition, for honest intentions, and for an extreme aversion to all hypocrisy; so that although he was naturally reserved and haughty, he could scarce, even from necessity, dissemble his thoughts and feelings. These qualities were not, however, sufficient to ensure either his own or his people's happiness. His reign was, upon the whole, one of the most disgraceful and disastrous in the history of the empire.

The mother of Maria Theresa was Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick, a lovely and amiable woman, who possessed and deserved her husband's entire confidence and affection. Lady Wortley Montagu, who visited the court of Vienna only a few months before the birth of Maria Theresa, speaks of the beauty and beneficence of the empress, and of her sweet and gracious manners with a kind of rapture. She gives us, too, a very amusing description of the stupid and trivial etiquette of a court at once dissipated and punctilious, solemn and splendid.

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The two archduchesses were brought up under the superintendence of their mother, and received an education in no respect different from that of other young ladies of rank of the same age and country, except that they were kept in more strict seclusion. Maria Theresa had beauty, spirit, and understanding. Marianna was as lovely as her sister, but inferior in capacity, and of a very mild and reserved disposition; both sisters were tenderly attached to each other.

While Charles gave up many a sleepless night, and put in action all the subtlest springs of diplomacy to secure to his daughter the possession of a throne, it does not appear to have entered into his calculation to give her an education befitting the situation to which she was destined; he, indeed, admitted her at the age of fourteen to be present at the sittings of the council, for, as declared heiress of the crown, it was a point of custom, and of that state etiquette which he was never known to infringe; but he never disclosed to her any of his affairs, never conversed with her on any subject of importance, never even allowed her an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the forms of business. While she sat in the council, she was always silent; but it was observed, that, however protracted the deliberations, she never betrayed any signs of weariness, but listened with the most eager attention to all she could, and all she could not, understand. The only use she made of her new privilege was to be the bearer of petitions in behalf of those who prevailed on her benevolence or her youthful inexperience, to intercede for them. The emperor, becoming at length impatient at the increasing number of these petitions, said to her on one occasion, "You seem to think a sovereign has nothing to do but to grant favours!"—"I see nothing else that can make a crown supportable," replied his daughter: she was then about fifteen.

In those accomplishments to which her time was

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chiefly devoted, Maria Theresa made rapid progress. She inherited from her father a taste for music, which was highly cultivated, and remained to the end of her life one of her principal pleasures. She danced and moved with exquisite grace. Metastasio, who taught her Italian, and also presided over her musical studies, speaks of his pupil with delight and admiration, and in his letters he often alludes to her talent, her docility, and the sweetness of her manners. Of her progress in graver acquirements we do not hear; much of her time was given to the strict observance of the forms of the Roman Catholic faith; and though she could not derive from the bigoted old women and ecclesiastics around her any very enlarged and enlightened ideas of religion, her piety was at least sincere. She omitted no opportunities of obtaining information relative to the history and geography of her country, and she appears to have been early possessed with a most magnificent idea of the power and grandeur of her family, and of the lofty rank to which she was destined. This early impression of her own vast importance was only counterbalanced by her feelings and habits of devotion, and by the natural sweetness and benignity of her disposition.

Such was Maria Theresa at the age of sixteen or seventeen. She had been destined from her infancy to marry the young Duke of Lorraine, who was brought up in the court of Vienna as her intended husband. It is very, very seldom that these political state marriages terminate happily, or harmonize with the wishes and feelings of those principally concerned; but in the present case "the course of true love" was blended with that of policy. Francis Stephen of Lorraine was the son of Leopold Duke of Lorraine, surnamed the Good and Benevolent. His grandmother, Leonora of Austria, was the eldest sister of Charles VI., and he was consequently the cousin of his intended bride. Francis was not pos-

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sessed of shining talents, but he had a good understanding and an excellent heart; he was, besides, eminently handsome, indisputably brave, and accomplished in all the courtly exercises that became a prince and a gentleman. In other respects his education had been strangely neglected; he could scarcely read or write. From childhood the two cousins had been fondly attached, and their attachment was perhaps increased, at least on the side of Maria Theresa, by those political obstacles which long deferred their union, and even threatened at one time a lasting separation. Towards the end of his reign the affairs of Charles VI., through his imbecility and misgovernment, fell into the most deplorable, the most inextricable confusion. Overwhelmed by his enemies, unaided by his friends and allies, he absolutely entertained the idea of entering into a treaty with Spain, and offering his daughter Maria Theresa in marriage to Prince Charles, the heir of that monarchy.

But Maria Theresa was not of a temper to submit quietly to an arrangement of which she was to be made the victim; she remonstrated, she wept, she threw herself for support and assistance into her mother's arms. The empress, who idolized her daughter, and regarded the Duke of Lorraine as her son, incessantly pleaded against this sacrifice of her daughter's happiness. The English minister at Vienna* gives the following lively description of the state of affairs at this time, and of the feelings and deportment of the young archduchess:—"She is," says Mr. Robinson, "a princess of the highest spirit; her father's losses are her own. She reasons already; she enters into affairs; she admires his virtues, but condemns his mismanagement; and is of a temper so formed for rule and ambition, as to look upon him as little more than her administrator.

* Mr. Robinson, afterward the first Lord Grantham of his family

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Notwithstanding this lofty humour, she sighs and pines for her Duke of Lorraine. If she sleeps, it is only to dream of him; if she wakes, it is but to talk of him to the lady in waiting; so that there is no more probability of her forgetting the very individual government and the very individual husband which she thinks herself born to than of her forgiving the authors of her losing either."

Charles VI., distracted and perplexed by the difficulties of his situation, by the passionate grief of his daughter, by the remonstrances of his wife and the rest of his family, and without spirit, or abilities, or confidence in himself or others, became a pitiable object. During the day, and while transacting business with his ministers, he maintained his accustomed dignity and formality; but in the dead of the night, in the retirement of his own chamber, and when alone with the empress, he gave way to such paroxysms of affliction, that not his health only, but his life was endangered, and his reason began to give way. A peace with France had become necessary on any terms, and almost at any sacrifice; and a secret negotiation was commenced with Cardinal Fleury, then at the head of the French government, under (or, more properly speaking, *over*) Louis the Fifteenth. By one of the principal articles of this treaty, the duchy of Lorraine was to be given up to France, and annexed to that kingdom; and the Duke of Lorraine was to receive, in lieu of his hereditary possessions, the whole of Tuscany. The last Grand-duke of Tuscany of the family of the Medici, the feeble and degenerate Cosmo III., was still alive, but in a state of absolute dotage, and the claims of his heiress, Anna de' Medici, were to be set aside. Neither the inhabitants of Lorraine nor the people of Tuscany were consulted in this arbitrary exchange. A few diplomatic notes between Charles's secretary Bartenstein and the crafty old cardinal settled the matter. It was in vain that the government of Tus-

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cany remonstrated, and in vain that Francis of Lorraine overwhelmed the Austrian ministers with reproaches, and resisted, as far as he was able, this impudent transfer of his own people and dominions to a foreign power. Bartenstein had the insolence to say to him, "Monseigneur, point de cession, point d'archiduchesse." Putting love out of the question, Francis could not determine to stake his little inheritance against the brilliant succession which awaited him with Maria Theresa. The alternative, however, threw him into such agony and distress of mind, that even his health was seriously affected. But peace was necessary to the interests, and even to the preservation of the empire. Lorraine was given up, and the reversion of the grand-duchy of Tuscany settled upon Francis.* The preliminaries of this treaty being signed in 1735, the emperor was relieved from impending ruin, and his daughter from all her apprehensions of the Prince of Spain; and, no further obstacles intervening, the nuptials of Maria Theresa and Francis of Lorraine were celebrated at Vienna in February, 1736. By the marriage contract the Pragmatic Sanction was again signed and ratified, and the Duke of Lorraine solemnly bound himself never to assert any personal right to the Austrian dominions. The two great families of Hapsburgh and Lorraine, descended from a common ancestor, were by this marriage reunited in the same stock.

Prince Eugene, who had commanded the imperial armies for nearly forty years, died a few days after the marriage of Maria Theresa, at the age of seventy-three. His death was one of the greatest misfortunes that could have occurred at this period, both to the emperor and the nation.

A young princess, beautiful and amiable, the heiress of one of the greatest monarchies in Europe,

* Tuscany has ever since remained in the family of Lorraine; the present Grand-duke Leopold II. is the great-grandson of Francis.

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married at the age of eighteen to the man whom she had long and deeply loved, and who returned her affection, and soon the happy mother of two fair infants, presents to the imagination as pretty a picture of splendour and felicity as ever was exhibited in romance or fairy tale; but when we turn over the pages of history, or look into real life, everywhere we behold the hand of a just Providence equalizing the destiny of mortals.

During the four years which elapsed between Maria Theresa's marriage and her accession to the throne, her life was imbittered by anxieties arising out of her political position. Her husband was appointed generalissimo of the imperial armies against the Turks, in a war which both himself and Maria Theresa disapproved. He left her in the first year of their marriage to take the command of the army, and more than once too rashly exposed his life. Francis had more bravery than military skill; he was baffled and hampered in his designs by the weak jealousy of the emperor and the cabals of the ministers and generals. All the disasters of two unfortunate campaigns were imputed to him, and he returned to Vienna disgusted, irritated, sick at heart, and suffering from illness. The court looked coldly on him; he was unpopular with the nation and with the soldiery; but his wife received him with open arms, and, with a true woman's tenderness, "loved him for the dangers he had passed." She nursed him into health, she consoled him, she took part in all his wrongs and feelings, and was content to share with him the frowns of her father and the popular dislike. They were soon afterward sent into a kind of honourable exile into Tuscany, under pretence of going to take possession of their new dominions and in their absence it was publicly reported that the emperor intended to give his second daughter to the Elector of Bavaria, to change the order of succession in her favour, and disinherit Maria Theresa. The

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archduchess and her husband were more annoyed than alarmed by these reports, but their sojourn at Florence was a period of constant and cruel anxiety. Maria Theresa had no sympathies with her Italian subjects; she had no poetical or patriotic associations to render the "fair white walls of Florence" and its olive and vine-covered hills interesting or dear to her; she disliked the heat of the climate; she wished herself at Vienna, whence every post brought some fresh instance of her father's misgovernment, some new tidings of defeat or disgrace. She mourned over the degradation of her house, and saw her magnificent and far-descended heritage crumbling away from her. The imbecile emperor, without confidence in his generals, his ministers, his family, or himself, exclaimed, in an agony, "Is then the fortune of my empire departed with Eugene?" and he lamented hourly the absence of Maria Theresa, in whose strength of mind he had ever found support when his pride and jealousy allowed him to seek it. The archduchess and her husband returned to Vienna in 1739, and soon afterward the disastrous war with the Turks was terminated by a precipitate and dishonourable treaty, by which Belgrade was ceded to the Ottoman Porte. The situation of the court of Vienna at this period is thus described by the English minister, Robinson:—"Every thing in this court is running into the last confusion and ruin, where there are as visible signs of folly and madness as ever were inflicted on a people whom Heaven is determined to destroy, no less by domestic divisions than by the more public calamities of repeated defeats, defencelessness, poverty, plague, and famine."

Such was the deplorable state in which Charles bequeathed to his youthful heiress the dominions which had fallen to him prosperous, powerful, and victorious, only thirty years before. The agitation of his mind fevered and disordered his frame, and

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one night, after eating most voraciously of a favourite dish,* he was seized with an indigestion, of which he expired October 20th, 1740. Maria Theresa, who was then near her confinement, was not allowed to enter her father's chamber. We are told that the grief she felt on hearing of his dissolution endangered her life for a few hours, but that the following day she was sufficiently recovered to give audience to the ministers. The necessary measures were taken to secure her peaceful succession, and she was proclaimed at Vienna, without any of that tumult and opposition which had been anticipated by her timid and desponding council.

Maria Theresa was in her twenty-fourth year when she became in her own right Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduchess of Austria, Sovereign of the Netherlands, and Duchess of Milan, of Parma, and Placentia; in right of her husband she was also Grand-duchess of Tuscany. Naples and Sicily had indeed been wrested from her father, but she pretended to the right of those crowns, and long entertained the hope and design of recovering them. She reigned over some of the finest and fairest provinces of Europe; over many nations speaking many different languages, governed by different laws, divided by mutual antipathies, and held together by no common link except that of acknowledging the same sovereign. That sovereign was now a young inexperienced woman, who had solemnly sworn to preserve inviolate and indivisible the vast and heterogeneous empire transmitted to her feeble hand, as if it had depended on her will to do so. Within the first few months of her reign the Pragmatic Sanction, so frequently guarantied, was trampled under foot. France deferred, and at length declined to acknowledge her title. The Elector of Bavaria, supported by France, laid claim to Austria, Hungary,

* Mushrooms stewed in oil.

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and Bohemia. The King of Spain also laid claim to the Austrian succession, and prepared to seize on the Italian states; the King of Sardinia claimed Milan; the King of Prussia, not satisfied with merely advancing pretensions, pounced like a falcon on his prey,—

Spiegato il crudo sanguinoso artiglio,—

and seized upon the whole duchy of Silesia, which he laid waste and occupied with his armies.*

Like the hind of the forest when the hunters are abroad, who hears on every side the fierce baying of the hounds, and stands and gazes round with dilated eye and head erect, not knowing on which side the fury of the chase is to burst upon her,—so stood the lovely majesty of Austria, defenceless, and trembling for her very existence, but not weak, nor irresolute, nor despairing.

Maria Theresa was by no means an extraordinary woman. In talents and strength of character she was inferior to Catherine of Russia and our Elizabeth, but in moral qualities far superior to either; and it may be questioned whether the brilliant genius of the former, or the worldly wisdom and sagacity of the latter, could have done more to sustain a sinking throne than the popular and feminine virtues, the magnanimous spirit, and unbending fortitude of Maria Theresa. She had something of the inflexible pride and hereditary obstinacy of her family; her understanding, naturally good, had been early tinged with bigotry and narrowed by illiberal prejudices; but in her early youth these qualities only showed on the fairer side, and served but to impart something fixed and serious to the vivacity of her

* The French government had secretly matured a plan of partition, by which the inheritance of Maria Theresa was to have been divided among the different claimants in the following manner:—Bohemia and Upper Austria were assigned to the Elector of Bavaria; Moravia and Upper Silesia to the Elector of Saxony; Lower Silesia to the King of Prussia; and Lombardy to the King of Spain.

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disposition and the yielding tenderness of her heart. She had all the self-will and all the sensibility of her sex; she was full of kindly impulses and good intentions; she was not naturally ambitious, though circumstances afterward developed that passion in a strong degree; she could be roused to temper, but this was seldom, and never so far as to forget the dignity and propriety of her sex. It should be mentioned, for in the situation in which she was placed it was by no means an unimportant advantage, that at this period of her life few women could have excelled Maria Theresa in personal attractions. Her figure was tall, and formed with perfect elegance; her deportment at once graceful and majestic; her features were regular; her eyes were gray, and full of lustre and expression; she had the full Austrian lips, but her mouth and smile were beautiful; her complexion was transparent; she had a profusion of fine hair; and, to complete her charms, the tone of her voice was peculiarly soft and sweet. Her strict religious principles, or her early and excessive love for her husband, or the pride of her royal station, or perhaps all these combined, had preserved her character from coquetry. She was not unconscious of her powers of captivation, but she used them, not as a woman, but as a queen; not to win lovers, but to gain over refractory subjects. The "fascinating manner" which the historian records, and for which she was so much admired, became later in life rather too courtly and too artificial; but at four-and-twenty it was the result of kind feeling, natural grace, and youthful gayety.

The perils which surrounded Maria Theresa at her accession were such as would have appalled the strongest mind. She was not only encompassed by enemies without, but threatened with commotions within: she was without an army, without a treasury, and, in point of fact, without a ministry; for never was such a set of imbecile men collected to-

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gether to direct the government of a kingdom, as those who composed the *conference*, or state-council of Vienna, during this period. They agreed but in one thing; in jealousy of the Duke of Lorraine, whom they considered as a foreigner, and who was content perforce to remain a mere cipher.

Maria Theresa began her reign by committing a mistake, very excusable at her age. Her father's confidential minister, Bartenstein, continued to direct the government, though he had neither talents nor resources to meet the fearful exigencies in which they were placed. The young queen had sufficient sense to penetrate the characters of Sinzendorf and Staremberg; she had been disgusted by their attempts to take advantage of her sex and age, and to assume the whole power to themselves. She wished for instruction, but she was of a temper to resist any thing like dictation. Bartenstein discovered her foible; and by his affected submission to her judgment, and admiration of her abilities, he conciliated her good opinion. His knowledge of the forms of business, which extricated her out of many little embarrassments, she mistook for political sagacity; his presumption for genius; his volubility, his readiness with his pen, all conspired to dazzle the understanding and win the confidence of an inexperienced woman. It is generally allowed that he was a weak and superficial man; but he possessed two good qualities,—he was sincerely attached to the interests of the house of Austria, and, as a minister, incorruptible.

In her husband Maria Theresa found ever a faithful friend, and comfort and sympathy when she most needed them; but hardly advice, support, or aid. Francis was the soul of honour and affection, but he was illiterate, fond of pleasure, and unused to business. Much as his wife loved him, she either loved power more, or was conscious of his inability to wield it. Had he been an artful or an ambitious

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man, Francis might easily have obtained over the mind of Maria Theresa that unbounded influence which a man of sense can always exercise over an affectionate woman; but humbled by her superiority of rank, and awed by her superiority of mind, he never made the slightest attempt to guide or control her, and was satisfied to hold all he possessed from her love or from her power.

The first war in which Maria Theresa was engaged was begun in self-defence; never was the sword drawn in a fairer quarrel or a juster cause. Her great adversary was Frederic II. of Prussia, aided by France and Bavaria. On the side of the young queen were England and Holland. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm which her helpless situation had excited among the English of all ranks: the queen of Hungary was a favourite toast,—her head a favourite sign. The parliament voted large subsidies to support her, and the ladies of England, with the old Duchess of Marlborough at their head, subscribed a sum of 100,000*l.*, which they offered to her acceptance. Maria Theresa, who had been so munificently aided by the king and parliament, either did not think it consistent with her dignity to accept of private gifts, or from some other reason declined the proffered contribution.

The war of the Austrian succession lasted nearly eight years. The battles and the sieges, the victories and defeats, the treaties made and broken, the strange events and vicissitudes which marked its course, may be found duly chronicled and minutely detailed in histories of France, England, or Germany. It is more to our present purpose to trace the influence which the character of Maria Theresa exercised over passing events, and their reaction on the fate, feelings, and character of the woman.

Her situation in the commencement of the war appeared desperate. Frederic occupied Silesia, and in the first great battle in which the Austrians and

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Prussians were engaged (the battle of Molwitz), the former were entirely defeated. Still the queen refused to yield up Silesia, at which price she might have purchased the friendship of her dangerous enemy. Indignant at his unprovoked and treacherous aggression, she disdainfully refused to negotiate while he had a regiment in Silesia, and rejected all attempts to mediate between them. The birth of her first son, the archduke Joseph, in the midst of these distresses, confirmed her resolution: maternal tenderness now united with her family pride and her royal spirit, and to alienate voluntarily any part of his inheritance appeared not only a humiliation, but a crime. She addressed herself to all the powers which had guarantied the Pragmatic Sanction, and were therefore bound to support her;—and first to France. To use her own words, "I wrote," said she, "to Cardinal Fleury;—pressed by hard necessity, I descended from my royal dignity, and wrote to him in terms which would have softened stones!" But the old cardinal was absolute *flint*. From age and long habit, he had become a kind of political machine, actuated by no other principle than the interests of his government; he deceived the queen with delusive promises and diplomatic delays till all was ready; then the French armies poured across the Rhine, and joined the Elector of Bavaria. They advanced in concert within a few leagues of Vienna. The elector was declared Duke of Austria, and, having overrun Bohemia, he invested the city of Prague.

The young queen, still weak from her recent confinement, and threatened in her capital, looked round her in vain for aid and counsel. Her allies had not yet sent her the promised assistance; her most sanguine friends drooped in despair; her ministers looked upon each other in blank dismay. At this crisis the spirit of a feeling and high-minded woman saved herself, her capital, and her kingdom. Maria

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Theresa took alone the resolution of throwing herself into the arms of her Hungarian subjects.

Who has not read of the scene which ensued, which has so often been related, so often described? and yet we all feel that we cannot hear of it too often. When we first meet it on the page of history, we are taken by surprise, as though it had no business there; it has the glory and the freshness of old romance. Poetry never invented any thing half so striking, or that so completely fills the imagination.

The Hungarians had been oppressed, enslaved, insulted by Maria Theresa's predecessors. In the beginning of her reign, she had abandoned the usurpations of her ancestors, and had voluntarily taken the oath to preserve all their privileges entire. This was partly from policy, but it was also partly from her own just and kind nature. The hearts of the Hungarians were already half-won when she arrived at Presburg, in June, 1741. She was crowned Queen of Hungary on the 13th, with the peculiar national ceremonies; the iron crown of St. Stephen was placed on her head, the tattered but sacred robe thrown over her own rich habit, which was incrusted with gems, his scimitar girded to her side. Thus attired, and mounted upon a superb charger, she rode up the Royal Mount,* and, according to the antique custom, drew her sabre, and defied the four quarters of the world, "in a manner that showed she had no occasion for that weapon to conquer all who saw her."† The crown of St. Stephen, which had never before been placed on so small or so lovely a head, had been lined with cushions to make it fit; it was also very heavy, and its weight, added to the heat of the weather, incommoded her; when she sat down to dinner in the great hall of the castle, she expressed

* A rising ground near Presburg, so called from being consecrated to this ceremony.

† Mr. Robinson's despatches.

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a wish to lay it aside. On lifting the diadem from her brow, her hair, loosened from confinement, fell down in luxuriant ringlets over her neck and shoulders; the glow which the heat and emotion had diffused over her complexion added to her natural beauty, and the assembled nobles, struck with admiration, could scarce forbear from shouting their applause.

The effect which her youthful grace and loveliness produced on this occasion had not yet subsided when she called together the Diet, or Senate of Hungary, in order to lay before them the situation of her affairs. She entered the hall of the castle, habited in the Hungarian costume, but still in deep mourning for her father; she traversed the apartment with a slow and majestic step, and ascended the throne, where she stood for a few minutes silent. The chancellor of the state first explained the situation to which she was reduced, and then the queen, coming forward, addressed the assembly in Latin, a language which she spoke fluently, and which is still in common use among the Hungarians.

"The disastrous state of our affairs," said she, "has moved us to lay before our dear and faithful states of Hungary the recent invasion of Austria, the danger now impending over this kingdom, and propose to them the consideration of a remedy. The very existence of the kingdom of Hungary, of our own person, of our children, of our crown, are now at stake, and, forsaken by all, we place our sole hope in the fidelity, arms, and long-tried valour of the Hungarians!"

She pronounced these simple words in a firm but melancholy tone. Her beauty, her magnanimity, and her distress roused the Hungarian chiefs to the wildest pitch of enthusiasm: they drew their sabres half out of the scabbard, then flung them back to the hilt with a martial sound, which re-echoed through the lofty hall, and exclaimed with one accord, "Our

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swords and our blood for your majesty—we will die for our *king*, Maria Theresa!" Overcome by sudden emotion, she burst into a flood of tears. At this sight, the nobles became almost frantic with enthusiasm. "We wept too," said a nobleman, who assisted on this occasion (Count Koller); "but they were tears of admiration, pity, and fury." They retired from her presence, to vote supplies of men and money, which far exceeded all her expectations.*

Two or three days after this extraordinary scene, the deputies again assembled, to receive the oath of Francis of Lorraine, who had been appointed co-regent of Hungary. Francis, having taken the required oath, waved his arm over his head and exclaimed with enthusiasm, "My blood and life for the queen and kingdom!" It was on this occasion that Maria Theresa took up her infant son in her arms and presented him to the deputies, and again they burst into the acclamation, "We will die for Maria Theresa and her children!"†

The devoted loyalty of her Hungarian subjects changed the aspect of her affairs. Tribes of wild warriors from the Turkish frontiers, Croats, Pandours, and Sclavonians, never before seen in the wars of civilized Europe, crowded round her standard, and by their strange appearance and savage mode of warfare struck terror into the disciplined soldiers of Germany. Vienna was placed in a state

* "——Fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
From hill to hill the beacon's towering blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;
The fierce Croatian, and the wild Hussar,
With all the sons of ravage, crowd the war!"
Dr. Johnson—Vanity of Human Wishes.

† September 21st, 1741. The Archduke Joseph was then about six months old. It was not when Maria Theresa made her speech to the Diet on the 13th that she held up her son in her arms, for it appears that he was not brought to Presburg till the 20th. Voltaire, whose account is generally read and copied, is true in the main, but more eloquent than accurate.

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of defence; and Frederic, fallen from his "pitch of pride," began to show some desire for an accommodation: at length a truce was effected by the mediation of England; and the queen consented, with deep reluctance and an aching heart, to give up a part of Silesia, as a sop to this royal Cerberus. Hard necessity compelled her to this concession, for while she was defending herself against the Prussians on one side, the French and Bavarians were about to overwhelm her on the other. The Elector of Bavaria had seized on Bohemia, and was crowned King of Prague; and under the auspices and influence of France, he was soon afterward elected Emperor of Germany, and crowned at Frankfort by the title of Charles VII.

It had been the favourite object of Maria Theresa to place the imperial crown on the head of her husband. The election of Charles was therefore a deep mortification to her, and deeply she avenged it. Her armies, under the command of the Duke of Lorraine and General Kevenhuller, entered Bavaria, wasted the hereditary dominions of the new emperor with fire and sword, and on the very day on which he was proclaimed at Frankfort, his capital Munich surrendered to the Austrians, and the Duke of Lorraine entered the city in triumph; such were the strange vicissitudes of war!

Within a few months afterward the French were everywhere beaten; they were obliged to evacuate Prague, and accomplished with great difficulty their retreat to Egra. So much was the queen's mind imbittered against them, that their escape at this time absolutely threw her into an agony; she had, however, sufficient self-command to conceal her indignation and disappointment from the public, and celebrated the surrender of Prague by a magnificent fête at Vienna; among other entertainments there was a chariot-race in imitation of the Greeks; in which, to exhibit the triumph of her sex, ladies alone

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were permitted to contend, and the queen herself and her sister entered the lists: it must have been a beautiful and gallant sight. Soon afterward Maria Theresa proceeded to Prague, where she was crowned Queen of Bohemia, May 12, 1743.

In Italy she was also victorious. Her principal opponent in that quarter was the high-spirited Elizabeth Farnese, the reigning queen of Spain.* This imperious woman, who thought she could manage a war as she managed her husband, commanded her general, on pain of instant dismissal, to fight the Austrians within three days: he did so, and was defeated.

At the close of this eventful year Maria Theresa had the pleasure of uniting her sister Marianna to Prince Charles of Lorraine, her husband's brother. They had been long attached to each other, and the archduchess was beautiful and amiable; but a union which promised so much happiness was mournfully terminated by the death of Marianna within a few months after her marriage.

The effect produced on the mind of Maria Theresa by these sudden vicissitudes of fortune and extraordinary successes was not altogether favourable. She had met dangers with fortitude, she had endured reverses with magnanimity; but she could not triumph with moderation: sentiments of hatred, of vengeance, of ambition, had been awakened in her heart by the wrongs of her enemies and her own successes. She indulged a personal animosity against the Prussians and the French, which almost shut her heart, good and beneficent as Heaven had formed it, against humanity and the love of peace. She not only rejected with contempt all pacific overtures, and refused to acknowledge the new emperor, but she meditated vast schemes of conquest and retaliation; she not only resolved on recovering Silesia,

* Third wife of Philip V.; her story is very prettily told by Madame de Genlis, in "La Princesse des Ursins."

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and appropriating Bavaria, but she formed plans for crushing her great enemy Frederic of Prussia, and partitioning his dominions, as he had conspired to ravage and dismember hers.

This excess of elation was severely chastised. In 1744 she lost Bavaria. Frederic suspected and anticipated her designs against him; with his usual celerity he marched into Bohemia, besieged and captured Prague, and made even Vienna tremble. Maria Theresa had one trait of real greatness of mind—she was always greatest in adversity. She again had recourse to her brave Hungarians, and repairing to Presburg, she employed with such effect her powers of captivation, that she made every man who approached her a hero for her sake. The old palatine of Hungary, Count Palffy, unfurled the blood-red standard of the kingdom, and called on the magnates to summon their vassals and defend their queen: 44,000 men crowded round the national banner, and 30,000 more were ready to take the field. Maria Theresa, who knew as well as Mary Stuart herself the power of a woman's smile, or word, or gift, bestowed apropos, sent to Count Palffy on this occasion her own charger, royally caparisoned, a sabre enriched with diamonds, and a ring, with these few words in her own handwriting:—

"Father Palffy, I send you this horse, worthy of being mounted by none but the most zealous of my faithful subjects; receive at the same time this sword to defend me against my enemies, and this ring as a mark of my affection for you.

"MARIA THERESA."

The enthusiasm which her charms and her address excited in Hungary, from the proudest palatine to the meanest peasant, again saved her. In the following year Bohemia and Bavaria were recovered; and the unfortunate emperor, Charles the Seventh,

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driven from all his possessions, after playing for a while a miserable pageant of royalty in the hands of the French, died almost broken-hearted:* with his last breath he exhorted his successor to make peace with Austria, and reject the imperial dignity which had been so fatal to his family. The new elector, Maximilian Joseph, obeyed these last commands, and no other competitor appearing, Maria Theresa was enabled to fulfil the ambition of her heart, by placing the imperial diadem on her husband's head. Francis was proclaimed Emperor of Germany at Frankfort; and the queen, who witnessed from a balcony the ceremony of election, was the first who exclaimed "Vive l'emperor!" From this time Maria Theresa, uniting in herself the titles of Empress of Germany and Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, is styled in history the empress-queen. This accession of dignity was the only compensation for a year of disasters and losses in Italy and the Netherlands. Still she would not submit, nor bend her high spirit to an accommodation with Frederic on the terms he offered; and still she rejected all mediation; at length the native generosity of her disposition prevailed. The Elector of Saxony,† who had been for some time her most faithful and efficient ally, was about to become a sacrifice through his devotion to her cause, and only peace could save him and his people. For his sake the queen stooped to what she never would have submitted to for any advantage to herself, and on Christmas-day, 1745, she signed the peace of Dresden, by which she finally ceded Silesia to Frederic, who, on this condition, withdrew his troops from Saxony, and acknowledged Francis as emperor.

The war with Louis XV. still continued with va-

* "His foes' derision, and his subjects' blame,
He steals to death, from anguish and from shame!"
Dr. Johnson—Vanity of Human Wishes.

† Augustus III.

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rious changes of fortune; in 1746 she lost nearly the whole of the Netherlands. The French were commanded by Marshal Saxe, the Austrians by Charles of Lorraine. The former was flushed with high spirits and repeated victories: the unfortunate Prince Charles was half-distracted by the loss of his wife: the Archduchess Marianna had died in her first confinement; and her husband, paralyzed by grief, could neither act himself, nor give the necessary orders to his army.

By this time (1747) all the sovereigns of Europe began to be wearied and exhausted by this sanguinary and burthensome war,—all, except Maria Theresa, whose pride, wounded by the forced cession of Silesia and the reduction of her territories in the Netherlands and in Italy, could not endure to leave off a loser in this terrible game of life. It is rather painful to see how the turmoils and vicissitudes of the last few years,—the habits of government and diplomacy, had acted on a disposition naturally so generous and so just. In her conference with the English minister she fairly got into a passion, exclaiming, with the utmost indignation and disdain, "that rather than agree to the terms of peace, she would lose her head," raising her voice as she spoke, and suiting the gesture to the words. With the same warmth she had formerly declared, that before she would give up Silesia she would *sell her shift*;—in both cases she was obliged to yield. When the plenipotentiaries of the various powers of Europe met at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, her ministers, acting by her instructions, threw every possible difficulty in the way of the pacification; and when at length she was obliged to accede, by the threat of her allies to sign without her, she did so with obvious, with acknowledged reluctance, and never afterward forgave England for having extorted her consent to this measure.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was one of

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the great events of the last century, was signed by the empress-queen on the 23d of October, 1748. "Thus," says the historian of Maria Theresa, "terminated a bloody and extensive war, which at the commencement threatened the very existence of the house of Austria; but the magnanimity of Maria Theresa, the zeal of her subjects, and the support of Great Britain triumphed over her numerous enemies, and secured an honourable peace. She retained possession of all her vast inheritance except Silesia, Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla. She recovered the imperial dignity, which had been nearly wrested from the house of Austria, and obtained the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction from the principal powers of Europe. She was, however, so dissatisfied, that her chagrin broke out on many occasions, and on none more than when Mr. Keith requested an audience to offer his congratulations on the return of peace. Maria Theresa ordered her minister to observe that compliments of condolence would be more proper than compliments of congratulation, and insinuated that the British minister would oblige the empress by sparing a conversation which would be highly disagreeable to her, and no less unpleasing to him."*

Maria Theresa had made peace with reluctance. She was convinced—that is, she *felt*—that it could not be of long continuance; but for the present she submitted. She directed her attention to the internal government of her dominions, and she resolved to place them in such a condition that she need not fear war whenever it was her interest to renew it.

She began by intrusting her military arrangements to the superintendence of Marshal Daun, one of the greatest generals of that time. She concerted with him a new and better system of discipline; and was the first who instituted a military academy at Vi-

* History of the House of Austria, vol. ii. p. 208.

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enna. She maintained a standing army of 108,000 men; she visited her camps and garrisons, and animated her troops by her presence, her gracious speeches, and her bounties. Her enemy, Frederic, tells us how well she understood and practised the art of enhancing the value of those distinctions which, however trifling, are rendered important by the manner of bestowing them. He acknowledges that "the Austrian army acquired, under the auspices of Maria Theresa, such a degree of perfection as it had never attained under any of her predecessors, and that a woman accomplished designs worthy of a great man."

But Maria Theresa accomplished other designs far more worthy of herself and of her sex. She made some admirable regulations in the civil government of her kingdom; she corrected many abuses which had hitherto existed in the administration of justice; she abolished for ever the use of torture throughout her dominions. The collection of the revenues was simplified; the great number of tax-gatherers, which she justly considered as an engine of public oppression, was diminished. Her father had left her without a single florin in the treasury; in 1750, after eight years of war and the loss of several states, her revenues exceeded those of her predecessors by six millions. One of her benevolent projects failed, but not through any fault of her own. She conceived the idea of civilizing the numerous tribes of gipsies in Hungary and Bohemia; but, after persevering for years, she was forced to abandon the design. Neither bribes nor punishment, neither mildness nor severity could subdue the wild spirit of freedom in these tameless, lawless outcasts of society, or bring them within the pale of civilization.

All the new laws and regulations, the changes and improvements which took place emanated from Maria Theresa herself, and they were all more or less wisely and benevolently planned, and beneficial

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in their effect. It does not appear that she was actuated by the calculating selfishness of Elizabeth, or the ostentation of Catherine the Second; motives of personal advantage ruled the first, and an insatiate vanity the other. We trace in Maria Theresa's public conduct two principles,—a regard for the honour of her house—that is, her royal and family pride,—and a love for her people; but, from the prejudices in which she had been educated, it frequently happened that the latter consideration was sacrificed to the former. What she designed and performed for the good of her subjects was done quietly and effectually, and what she wanted in genius was supplied by perseverance and good sense. Though peremptory in temper, jealous of her authority, and resisting the slightest attempt to lead or control her, Maria Theresa had no overweening confidence in her own abilities. She was at first almost painfully sensible of the deficiencies of her education and of her own inexperience; she eagerly sought advice and information, and gladly and gratefully accepted it from all persons, and on every occasion she listened patiently to long and contradictory explanations. She read memorials and counter memorials, voluminous, immeasurable, perplexing; she was not satisfied with knowing or comprehending every thing; she was, perhaps, a little too anxious to do every thing, see every thing, manage every thing herself. While in possession of health and strength she always rose at five in the morning, and often devoted ten or twelve hours together to the despatch of business; and, with all this close application to affairs, she found time to enter into society, to mingle in the amusements of her court, and to be the mother of sixteen children.

In her plans and wishes for the public good Maria Theresa had the sympathy, if not the co-operation, of her husband; but she derived little or no aid from the ministry, or, as it was termed, the conference, which was at this time (after the conclusion of the

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first war) more inefficient than even at the period of her accession. She had gradually become sensible of the incapacity and presumption of Bartenstein; and as he declined in favour and confidence, Count (afterward Prince) Kaunitz rose in her estimation. Kaunitz was ten years older than the empress; he had spent nearly his whole life in political affairs, rising from one grade to another, through all the subaltern offices of the state. He had been her minister at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748; in 1753 he was appointed chancellor of state,—in other words, prime minister,—and from this time ruled the councils of the empress-queen to the day of her death, a period of nearly thirty years. Frederic of Prussia describes Kaunitz as "un homme frivole dans ses gouts, profond dans les affaires." From the descriptions of those who knew him personally, he appears to have been a man of very extraordinary talents, without any elevation of character; a finical eccentric coxcomb in his manners; a bold, subtle, able statesman; inordinately vain, and, as his power increased, insolent and overbearing; yet indefatigable in business, and incorruptible in his fidelity to the interests of his sovereign.

Eight years of almost profound peace had now elapsed, and Maria Theresa was neither sensible of the value of the blessing, nor reconciled to the terms on which she had purchased it. While Frederic existed—Frederic, who had injured, braved, and humbled her—she was ready to exclaim, like Constance, "War! war! no peace! peace is to me a war!" In vain was she happy in her family, and literally adored by her subjects; she was not happy in herself. In her secret soul she nourished an implacable resentment against the King of Prussia; in the privacy of her cabinet she revolved the means of his destruction. The loss of Silesia was still nearest her heart, and she never could think of it but with shame and anguish. Mingling the imagination and

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sensibility of a woman with the wounded pride of a sovereign, she never could hear the word Silesia without a blush; never turned her eyes on the map, where it was delineated as part of her territories, without visible emotion; and never beheld a native of that district without bursting into tears. She might have said of Silesia, as Mary of England said of Calais, that it would be found after death engraven on her heart. There were other circumstances which added to the bitterness of her resentment. Frederic, who, if not the most detestable, was certainly the most disagreeable monarch ever recorded in history, had indulged in coarse and cruel sarcasms against the empress and her husband; they were repeated to her; they were such as equally insulted her delicacy as a woman and her feelings as a wife; and they sank deeper into her feminine mind than more real and more serious injuries. All Maria Theresa's passions, whether of love, grief, or resentment, par took of the hereditary obstinacy of her disposition. She could not bandy wit with her enemy, it was not in her nature; but hatred filled her heart, and projects of vengeance occupied all her thoughts. She looked round her for the means to realize them, there was no way but by an alliance with France,—with France, the hereditary enemy of her family and her country!—with France, separated from Austria by three centuries of mutual injuries and almost con stant hostility. The smaller states of Europe had long regarded their own safety as depending, in a great measure, on the mutual enmity and jealousy of these two great central powers; a gulf seemed for ever to divide them; but, instigated by the spirit of vengeance, Maria Theresa determined to leap that gulf.

Her plan was considered, matured, and executed in the profoundest secresy; even her husband was kept in perfect ignorance of her designs. She was not of a temper to fear his opposition, but her strong

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affection for him made her shrink from his disapprobation. Prince Kaunitz was her only coadjutor: he alone was intrusted with this most delicate and intricate negotiation, which lasted nearly two years. It was found necessary to conciliate Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV., who was at that time all-powerful. Kaunitz, in suggesting the expediency of this condescension, thought it necessary to make some apology. The empress merely answered, "Have I not flattered Farinelli?"* and, taking up her pen, without further hesitation, this descendant of a hundred kings and emperors—the pious, chaste, and proud Maria Theresa—addressed the low-born profligate favourite as "ma chère amie," and "ma cousine." The step was sufficiently degrading, but it answered its purpose. The Pompadour was won to the Austrian interest; and through her influence this extraordinary alliance was finally arranged, in opposition to the policy of both courts, and the real interests and inveterate prejudices of both nations.

When this treaty was first divulged in the council of Vienna, the Emperor Francis was so utterly shocked and confounded, that, striking the table with his hand, he vowed he would never consent to it, and left the room. Maria Theresa was prepared for this burst of indignation; she affected, with that duplicity in which she had lately become an adept, to attribute the whole scheme to her minister, and to be as much astonished as Francis himself. But she represented the necessity of hearing and considering the whole of this new plan of policy before they decided against it. With a mixture of artifice, reason, and tenderness, she gradually soothed the facile mind of her husband, and converted him to her own opinion, or at least convinced him that it was in vain to oppose it. When the report of a coalition between

* She had sent compliments and presents to the singer Farinelli when he was a favourite in the Spanish court.

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Austria and France was spread through Europe, it was regarded as something portentous. In England it was deemed incredible, or, as it was termed in parliament, unnatural and monstrous. The British minister at Vienna exclaimed, with astonishment, "Will you, the empress and archduchess, so far humble yourself as to throw yourself into the arms of France?"—"Not into the arms," she replied, with some haste and confusion, "but on the side of France. I have," she continued, "hitherto *signed* nothing with France, though I know not what may happen; but whatever does happen, I promise, on my word of honour, not to sign any thing contrary to the interests of your royal master, for whom I have a most sincere friendship and regard."

When we learn, with pain and regret, that at the time she spoke these words the treaty which united her interests with those of France was already *signed*, we ask, "Was this the high-minded heroine of Presburg? and was the word, the honour of a princess fallen so low, that they could be sacrificed to a mere diplomatic *ruse?*" If the dissimulation were necessary, it is not the less to be regretted; but through this whole affair the means were worthy of the motives and of the end in view. Her ingratitude to England, her first friend and ally, without whose aid she must have been crushed in the former war, and the want of fair dealing throughout, made a deep and unfavourable impression, not only in Europe generally, but on her own people, her court, and her family. Her husband was dissatisfied; her eldest daughter, the Archduchess Marianne, remonstrated; even the Archduke Joseph, then only sixteen, entreated her not to separate from England, or connect herself with "perfidious France." Maria Theresa was immoveable.

Such were the unworthy motives and feelings which led to the memorable alliance with France, and converted a benign and estimable woman into a

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fury of discord: they have since been terribly visited upon her country, and her children. The immediate result was "the seven years' war," in which Austria, France, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and afterward Spain, were confederated against the King of Prussia, who was assisted by Great Britain and Hanover; and only preserved from destruction by the enormous subsidies of England, and by his own consummate genius and intrepidity.

Until eclipsed by the great military events of the present century, this war stood unequalled for the skill, the bravery, and the wonderful resources displayed on both sides; for the surprising vicissitudes of victory and defeat; for the number of great battles fought within a short period; for the instances of individual heroism, and the tremendous waste of human life. In the former war our sympathies were all on the side of Maria Theresa. In the seven years' contest, we cannot refuse our admiration to the unshaken fortitude and perseverance with which Frederic defended himself against his enemies. He led his armies in person. The generals of Maria Theresa were Marshal Daun, Marshal Loudon, and Marshal Lacy; the first a Bohemian, the second of Scottish, and the third of Irish extraction. The empress, influenced equally by her tenderness and her prudence, would never allow her husband to take the field. Francis was personally brave, even to excess, but he had not the talents of a great commander, and his wife would neither risk his safety, nor hazard the fate of her dominions by intrusting her armies to his guidance.

In this war Maria Theresa recovered, and again lost Silesia: at one time she was nearly overwhelmed and on the point of being driven from her capital again the tide of war rolled back, and her troops drove Frederic from Berlin.

When Marshal Daun gained the victory of Kolin (June 18, 1757), by which the Austrian dominions

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were preserved from the most imminent danger, the empress-queen instituted the order of Maria Theresa, with which she decorated her victorious general and his principal officers. She loaded Daun with honours, and distributed rewards and gratuities to all the soldiers who had been present; medals were struck, Te Deums were sung;—in short, she triumphed gratefully and gloriously. When, a few years afterward, the same Marshal Daun lost a decisive battle,* after bravely contesting it, Maria Theresa received him with greater honours than after his former success; she even went out from her capital to meet him on his return, an honour never before conferred on any subject, and by the most flattering expressions of kindness and confidence, she raised his spirits and reconciled him with himself; and this was in reality a more glorious triumph. The Roman senators, when they voted thanks to Fabius after his defeat, "because he had not despaired of the fate of Rome," displayed not more magnanimity than did this generous woman, acting merely from the impulse of her own feminine nature.

When Frederic of Prussia captured any of the Austrian officers, he treated them with coldness, rigour, and sometimes insult; Maria Theresa never retaliated. When the Prince de Bevern was taken prisoner in Silesia, Frederic, like a mere heartless despot as he was, declined either to ransom or exchange him. He did not even deign to answer the prince's letters. The prince applied to Maria Theresa for permission to ransom himself, and she gave him his liberty at once, without ransom and without condition. These are things which never should be forgotten in estimating the character of Maria Theresa. Heaven had been so bountiful to her in mind and heart, that the possession of power could never entirely corrupt either: still and ever she was the benevolent and high-souled woman.

* The battle of Torgau.

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Next to France, her chief ally in this war was the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, whose motives of enmity against Frederic were, like those of Maria Theresa, of a personal nature. Frederic had indulged in some severe jests, at the expense of that weak and vicious woman; she retorted with an army of 50,000 men. It appears a just retribution that this man, who disdained or derided all female society, who neglected and ill-treated his wife, and tyrannized over his sisters,* should have been nearly destroyed through the influence of the sex he despised. Of all his enemies, the two empresses were the most powerful, dangerous, and implacable. In seven terrible and sanguinary campaigns did Frederic make head against the confederated powers; but the struggle was too unequal. In 1762 Maria Theresa appeared everywhere triumphant; all her most sanguine hopes were on the point of being realized, and another campaign must have seen her detested adversary ruined, or at her feet: such was the despondency of Frederic at this time, that he carried poison about him, firmly resolved that he would not be led a captive to Vienna. He was saved by one of those unforeseen events by which Providence so often confounds and defeats all the calculations of men. The Empress Elizabeth died, and was succeeded by Peter the Third, who entertained the most extravagant admiration for Frederic. Russia, from being a formidable enemy, became suddenly an ally. The face of things changed at once: the rival powers were again balanced, and the decision of this terrible game of ambition appeared as far off as ever.

But all parties were by this time wearied and exhausted; all wished for peace, and none would stoop to ask it. At length, one of Maria Theresa's officers,

* For one instance of his detestable tyranny, see the story of the poor Princess Amelia, in Thiebault.

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who had been wounded and taken prisoner,* ventured to hint to Frederic that his imperial mistress was not unwilling to come to terms. This conversation took place at the castle of Hubertsberg. The king, snatching up half a sheet of paper, wrote down in few words the conditions on which he was willing to make peace. The whole was contained in about ten lines. He sent this off to Vienna by a courier, demanding a definitive answer *within twelve days*. The Austrian ministers were absolutely out of breath at the idea; they wished to temporize, to delay. But Maria Theresa, with the promptitude of her character, decided at once; she accepted the terms, and the peace of Hubertsberg was concluded in 1763. By this treaty, all places and prisoners were given up; not a foot of territory was gained or lost by either party. Silesia continued in possession of Prussia; the political affairs of Germany remained in precisely the same state as before the war; but Saxony and Bohemia had been desolated, Prussia almost depopulated, and more than 500,000 men had fallen in battle.

France, to whom the Austrian alliance seems destined to be ever fatal, lost in this war the flower of her armies, half the coined money of the kingdom, almost all her possessions in America and in the East and West Indies, her marine, her commerce, and her credit;† and those disorders were fomented, those disasters precipitated, which at length produced the revolution, and brought the daughter of Maria Theresa to the scaffold.

Immediately after the peace of Hubertsberg the Archduke Joseph was elected King of the Romans, which ensured him the imperial title after the death of his father.

At the conclusion of the seven years' war Maria Theresa was in the forty-eighth year of her age.

* Thiebault, Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.
† Vide Siècle de Louis XV.

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During the twenty-four years of her public life the eyes of all Europe had been fixed upon her in hope, in fear, in admiration. She had contrived to avert from her own states the worst of those evils she had brought on others. Her subjects beheld her with a love and reverence little short of idolatry. In the midst of her weaknesses she had displayed many virtues; and if she had committed great errors, she had also performed great and good actions. But, besides being an empress and a queen, Maria Theresa was also a wife and a mother; and while she was guiding the reins of a mighty government, we are tempted to ask, where was her husband? and where her children?

Maria Theresa's attachment to her husband had been fond and passionate in her youth, and it was not only constant to death, but survived even in the grave. Francis was her inferior in abilities; his influence was not felt, like hers, to the extremity of the empire; but no man could be more generally beloved in his court and family. His children idolized him, and he was to them a fond and indulgent father. His temper was gay, volatile, and unambitious; his manners and person captivating. Although his education had been neglected, he had travelled much, had seen much, and, being naturally quick, social, and intelligent, he had gained some information on most subjects. In Italy he had imbibed a taste for the fine arts; he cultivated natural history, and particularly chymistry. While his wife was making peace and war, and ruling the destinies of nations, he amused himself among his retorts and crucibles, in buying pictures, or in superintending a ballet or an opera.

Francis expended immense sums in the study of alchymy;* he also believed that it was possible, by

* We find that during the reign of Maria Theresa the pursuit of the philosopher's stone was not only the fashion at Vienna, but was encouraged by the government. A belief in the doctrines of magic and in

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fusion, to convert several small diamonds into a large one: for it was not then known that the diamond was a combustible substance. His attempts in this way cost him large sums. He was fond of amassing money, apparently not so much from avarice as from an idea that wealth would give him a kind of power independent of his consort. Many instances are related of his humanity and beneficence, and his private charities are said to have been immense.

During the life of Francis, Vienna was a gay and magnificent capital. There was a fine opera, for which Gluck and Hasse composed the music, and Noverre superintended the ballets. He was fond of masks, balls, and fêtes; and long after the empress had ceased to take a pleasure in these amusements, she entered into them for her husband's sake. All accounts agree that they lived together in the most cordial union; that Maria Theresa was an example of every wife-like virtue,—except submission; and Francis a model of every conjugal virtue,—except fidelity. Such exceptions might have been supposed fatal to all domestic peace, but this imperial couple seem to present a singular proof to the contrary.

Francis submitted without a struggle to the ascendency of his wife; he even affected to make a display of his own insignificance as compared with her grandeur and power. Many instances are related of the extreme simplicity of his manners. Being once at the levée, when the empress-queen was giving audience to her subjects, he retired from the circle, and seated himself in a distant corner of

familiar spirits was also general, even among persons of rank. Princes, ministers, and distinguished military commanders were not exempt from this puerile superstition.

"Professor Jaquin," says Wraxall, writing from Vienna, "is empowered by the empress to receive proposals from such as are inclined to enter on the attempt to make gold,—in other words, to find the philosopher's stone. They are immediately provided by him with a room, charcoal, utensils, crucibles, and every requisite, at her imperial majesty's expense."

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the apartment, near two ladies of the court. On their attempting to rise, he said, "Do not mind me; I shall stay here till the court is gone, and then amuse myself with looking at the crowd." One of the ladies (the Countess Harrach) replied, "As long as your imperial majesty is present, the *court* will be here."—"You mistake," replied Francis; "the empress and my children are the court; I am here but as a simple individual."*

Though his deportment towards the empress was uniformly tender and respectful, Francis too often allowed his admiration, and even his affections, to stray from his legitimate sovereign. During the last few years of his life he was particularly attached to a very beautiful woman of the court, the Princess of Auersberg. He lavished on her immense sums in money and jewels, and his attentions to her, if they were not public, were at least no secret. The empress alone, with admirable self-command, would neither see, hear, nor comprehend what she could not resent without compromising her feminine and queenly dignity. The very power she possessed to mortify and disgrace her rival seemed to this really generous woman a reason for not exerting it. She would neither wound her husband's feelings, nor degrade herself by publicly slighting the object of his admiration. When the Princess of Auersberg appeared at court on state occasions, she was always received by the empress with the distinction due to her rank, and with a studied but undeviating politeness. Not the most prying courtier nor confidential lady of honour could have detected in the deportment of the empress either the jealous woman or the irritated sovereign.

In the summer of 1765 the imperial court left Vienna for Inspruck, in order to be present at the marriage of the Archduke Leopold with the Infanta of

* Coxe's Memoirs.

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Spain. The emperor had previously complained of indisposition, and seemed overcome by those melancholy presentiments which are often the result of a deranged system, and only remembered when they happen to be realized. He was particularly fond of his youngest daughter, Marie Antoinette, and, after taking leave of his children, he ordered her to be brought to him once more. He took her in his arms, kissed, and pressed her to his heart, saying, with emotion, "J'avais besoin d'embrasser encore cette enfant!" While at Inspruck he was much indisposed, and Maria Theresa, who watched him with solicitude, appeared miserable and anxious; she requested that he would be bled. He replied, with a petulance very unusual to him, "Madame, voulez vous que je meurs dans la saignée?" The heavy air of the valleys seemed to oppress him even to suffocation, and he was often heard to exclaim, "Ah! si je pouvais seulement sortir de ces montagnes du Tyrol!" On Sunday, August 18th, the empress and his sister again entreated him to be bled; he replied, "I must go to the Opera, and I am engaged afterward to sup with Joseph,* and cannot disappoint him, but I will be bled to-morrow." The same evening, on leaving the theatre, he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and expired in the arms of his son.

A scene of horror and confusion immediately ensued. While her family and attendants surrounded the empress, and the officers of the palace were running different ways in consternation, the body of Francis lay abandoned on a little wretched pallet in one of the anterooms, the blood oozing from the orifices in his temples, and not even a valet near to watch over him!

The anguish of Maria Theresa was heightened by her religious feelings, and the idea that her husband

* Wraxall says he was engaged to sup with the Princess of Auersberg.

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had been taken away in the midst of his pleasures, and before he had time to make his peace with God, seemed to press fearfully upon her mind. It was found necessary to remove her instantly. She was placed in a barge hastily fitted up, and, accompanied only by her son, her master of horse, and a single lady in waiting, she proceeded down the river to Vienna.

Previous to her departure, a courier was despatched to the three archduchesses, who had been left behind in the capital, bearing a letter which the empress had dictated to her daughters on the day after her husband's death. It was in these words:—

"Alas! my dear daughters, I am unable to comfort you! Our calamity is at its height; you have lost a most incomparable father, and I a consort—a friend—my heart's joy for forty-two years past! Having been brought up together, our hearts and our sentiments were united in the same views. All the misfortunes I have suffered during the last twenty-five years were softened by his support. I am suffering such deep affliction, that nothing but true piety and you, my dear children, can make me tolerate a life which, during its continuance, shall be spent in acts of devotion. Pray for our good and worthy master.* I give you my blessing, and will ever be your good mother,

"MARIA THERESA."

The remains of Francis the First were carried to Vienna, and, after lying in state, were deposited in the family-vault under the church of the Capuchins. When Maria Theresa was only six-and-twenty, and in the full bloom of youth and health, she had constructed in this vault a monument for herself and her husband. Hither, during the re-

* The Emperor Joseph.

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mainder of her life, she repaired on the 18th of every month, and poured forth her devotions at his tomb. Her grief had the same fixed character with all her other feelings; she wore mourning to the day of her death; she never afterward inhabited the state apartments in which she had formerly lived with her husband, but removed to a suite of rooms plainly, and even poorly, furnished, and hung with black cloth. There was no affectation in this excess of sorrow; her conduct was uniform during sixteen years. Though she held her court and attended to the affairs of the government as usual, she was never known to enter into amusements or to relax from the mournful austerity of her widowed state, except on public occasions, when her presence was absolutely necessary.

After the death of Francis, it was found that on the very day preceding his decease he had given to the Princess of Auersberg an order on the royal treasury for 200,000 florins. When it was presented for payment, the council were of opinion that a donation for so large a sum ought not, under all the circumstances, to be fulfilled. But Maria Theresa would not allow her husband's wishes to be disputed; with her native magnanimity of temper she interfered, and ordered the money to be paid immediately. It is said that she would have continued her countenance towards the princess but for an instance of unfeeling levity on the part of this woman which is almost inconceivable. At the first court which the empress held after her widowhood, the ladies were ordered to appear in mourning, and without rouge. The Princess of Auersberg appeared among the rest; her dress was the most rich and elegant that was compatible with etiquette, and, in defiance of the prohibition, she wore a profusion of rouge. When she approached the empress to kiss her hand, Maria Theresa, overcome by a variety of emotions, shrunk back from her, and withdrew her hand with a look

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of disgust and resentment. From this time the princess never appeared again at court; but Maria Theresa would not give to the people round her an excuse for treating with insult a woman who had been dear to her husband. She still extended her protection to her, and on many occasions showed a generous regard for her interests and welfare.

Maria Theresa was the mother of sixteen children, all born within twenty years. There is every reason to suppose that her naturally warm affections and her strong sense would have rendered her in a private station an admirable, an exemplary parent; and it was not her fault, but rather her misfortune, that she was placed in a situation where the most sacred duties and feelings of her sex became merely secondary. Though the idea was industriously disseminated through Europe that Maria Theresa presided herself over the education of her children, it is not and could not be true. While her numerous family were in their infancy, the empress was constantly and exclusively occupied in the public duties and cares of her high station; the affairs of government demanded almost every moment of her time. The court physician, Von Swietan, waited on her each morning at her *levée*, and brought her a minute report of the health of the princes and princesses. If one of them were indisposed, the mother, laying aside all other cares, immediately flew to their apartment; otherwise, she was often a week together without being able to see them. Their early education was intrusted entirely to the governors and the *grandes maitresses*,* and seems to have been as narrow and superficial as that of the empress herself.

Among the professors and teachers employed in the imperial family, the only one who really did his

* Marie Antoinette once caused the dismissal of one of the governesses, by confessing that all the letters and copies which had been shown to her mother as proofs of her progress had been previously traced with a pencil.—Vide Madame Campan.

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duty towards his pupils was Metastasio. They all spoke and wrote Italian with elegance and facility.* Maria Theresa herself had by no means a cultivated mind, and was unable to detect the ignorance and incapacity of the governors and governesses in respect to literature; but wherever she could use her own judgment and her own eyes, her orders and wishes were literally fulfilled. Thus all her children were brought up with extreme simplicity. They were not allowed to indulge in personal pride or caprice; their benevolent feelings were cultivated both by precept and example. They were sedulously instructed in the "Lives of the Saints," and all the tedious forms of unmeaning devotion, in which, according to the mistaken but sincere conviction of their mother, all true piety consisted. A high sense of family pride, an unbounded devotion to the house of Austria, and to their mother, the empress, as the head of that house, was early impressed upon their minds, and became a ruling passion as well as a principle of conduct with all of them.

We have only to glance back upon the history of the last fifty years to see the result of this mode of education. We find that the children of Maria Theresa, transplanted into different countries of Europe, carried with them their national and family prejudices; that some of them in later years supplied the defects of their early education, and became remarkable for talent and for virtue;† that all of them, even those who were least distinguished and estimable, displayed occasionally both goodness of heart and

* Vide Madame Campan's Memoirs of Marie Antoinette. Before the reign of Maria Theresa, and even until some years after her accession, French was not spoken at Vienna. Italian was the language of the court, and the Spanish costume was the court-dress. The alliance with France introduced the language and fashions of that country, which since that time have prevailed in the German courts.

† Vide the Life of Marie Antoinette, and Orloff's Mémoires sur Naples, v. 11. "La gloire et la prosperité de la maison d'Autriche est comme une passion enracinée dans le cœur de tous les enfans de Marie Thérèse."—Georgel.

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elevation of character; and that their filial devotion to their mother, and what they considered *her* interests, was carried to an excess which in one or two instances proved fatal to themselves.

Her eldest son Joseph succeeded his father as Emperor of Germany; he was born in 1741, and till the age of twelve he was confined to the daily task of reading the legends of the saints and other superstitious fables. He gave no indication at this time of the active mind and uncommon abilities which he afterward displayed, and all the qualities of a really fine understanding were concealed under an appearance of sullenness and timidity, amounting to apathy. This reserve was increased by the extreme partiality of the empress for a younger son, the Archduke Charles, a youth of the most brilliant talents, bold address, and almost untractable passions. If Maria Theresa had given more time and attention to the education of her children, she would not, in all probability, have so completely mistaken the character of her eldest son as to suppose him destitute equally of heart and intellect. She was often heard to express her regret that "Heaven had appointed him as her successor, and excluded from her throne a youth adorned with every quality requisite for governing mankind." The two brothers lived on ill terms, fomented by the unjust predilection of the parents. The consequence of these family disputes might have been as fatal to the peace of the empire as it was painful to the empress, if her favourite son had not been in mercy removed. He died in 1761, at the age of sixteen, at the very period when Maria Theresa was glorying in the success of her arms, and anticipating the ruin of her enemies. It was a deep, a terrible trial to the mother's heart. As she sat on the bed of her dying son, dissolved in tears, the young prince, taking her hand fondly in his, said, with a last effort, "Mother, do not weep for my death, for had I lived I should have given

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you far greater cause of sorrow." Soon afterward he expired.

Upon the death of Charles, the real character of Joseph began slowly to develop itself. His mother, who had often regretted his hard, inflexible temper, had once said to an artist, "I wish to teach my son to love the arts, if possible; it might soften his disposition; *for he has a hard heart!*" She did not quite succeed in softening his disposition, but while she lived she could counteract the ill effect of many of his faults; and, long before her death, his really great qualities obtained an interest in her affections, and a strong influence over her mind.

Joseph was married in his twentieth year to Elizabeth, Princess of Parma, whose story, in itself so romantic, has formed the groundwork of a romance.* She was an Italian, or rather a Spanish beauty, with a clear olive complexion, splendid dark eyes, and a charming figure. She possessed many talents and a cultivated mind, but her countenance was clouded by an expression of cold hauteur and melancholy which defeated all her attractions. Her husband, who became ardently attached to her, could never succeed in winning her affection, nor dissipate the gloom which hung upon her spirits. From the moment of her arrival at Vienna she was constantly heard to declare that her life would be of short duration. It was supposed that she had left behind her in Italy a lover whom she preferred, but the truth was never known. The forebodings of a disappointed heart or a distempered imagination were in this instance realized, and she died of the small-pox about two years after her marriage.

Joseph had not recovered his grief for her loss when the importunities of his father and mother induced him to consent to a second marriage, which reasons of state rendered advisable. He was united

* By Mrs. Charles Gore, who has told her story very beautifully, and with few dev . from historic truth .

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to the Princess of Bavaria, the daughter of his mother's adversary, Charles the Seventh. She was plain in person and unformed in mind, in every respect a most disagreeable contrast to his former beautiful and interesting wife; and from the first moment he treated her with neglect. The poor princess, unfortunately for herself, had deep and warm affections; she loved her husband, and, being but too conscious of her own defects and his aversion, she could scarcely meet him without the most painful emotion. When he addressed her, she would turn pale, tremble, stammer, and sometimes burst into tears. This want of self-possession only increased his dislike. Maria Theresa treated her daughter-in-law with coldness, and could not overcome her prejudice against the child of an inveterate enemy. Her family followed her example, and the situation of this unhappy woman, in a court where she was a stranger, and where all looked upon her with contempt or aversion, was really pitiable. The Emperor Francis alone treated her with some kindness, and, on hearing of his sudden death, she exclaimed, with a burst of tears, "Ah, malheureuse! j'ai perdu mon seul appui!" The rest of her short life was a series of miseries and mortifications. After a union of little more than two years she also sickened of the small-pox, and died in May, 1767. Joseph never could be persuaded to enter into a third marriage. It is said that he had become attached to the eldest daughter of his governor Prince Batthiani afterward Countess Windischgratz, and also to her sister Countess Esterhazi; but it was a species of attachment which did not compromise the discretion of either of those ladies. The rest of the history of Joseph belongs to a period subsequent to the death of his mother.

Leopold, the second surviving son of the empress, became, on the death of his father, Grand-duke of Tuscany, and governed that state for twenty-five

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years before he succeeded to the empire in 1790. He was a man of great capacity and original strength of mind, and introduced into the civil and religious establishments of Tuscany those reforms which have rendered it one of the most free and flourishing of the states of Italy.*

Ferdinand, her third son, married the daughter and heiress of Hercules Rinaldo, Duke of Modena, the last descendant of the Italian house of Este, and, in right of his wife, became Duke of Modena. He was a man of a mild and beneficent character.

Maximilian, the youngest son of Maria Theresa, became Elector of Cologne.

All the daughters of Maria Theresa were interesting or remarkable women, and all, except the eldest (Marianna), who was a little deformed, inherited more or less of their mother's personal beauty. The Archduchess Marianna and the Archduchess Elizabeth lived and died unmarried. They resided in the imperial palace, in constant attendance on their mother, and, we are told, "spent their lives more like nuns than princesses." Most of their time was devoted to study, to devotion, and acts of charity.

The Archduchess Christina was the mother's favourite, and deserved to be so. She was a very extraordinary woman, and by her talents for political intrigue, and her power over her mother and her married sisters, the Queens of France and Naples, exercised at one time no slight influence in the affairs of Europe. She resembled the empress in person and character, but excelled her in mental accomplishments. She was very beautiful and dignified, had a taste for literature, and was fond of painting. Her father had designed her to marry the Duke de Chablais, brother of the King of Sardinia; but the archduchess had already fixed her affections on Prince Albert of Saxony, and with the same perti-

* Forsyth's Italy.

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nacity of feeling and determination of purpose which had distinguished her mother on a similar occasion, she was resolved to have the man she had chosen, and no other. Maria Theresa, divided between the wishes of her husband and those of her daughter, was for some time rendered exceedingly unhappy, and there were painful divisions in the imperial family which are said to have hastened the treaty of Hubertsberg. Thus the wilfulness of a young princess in an "affaire du cœur" contributed to the pacification of Europe. The sudden death of the emperor removed the principal obstacle to her marriage; she obtained her mother's consent, and was united to Prince Albert in 1766. Though she and her husband were appointed joint-governors of Hungary, and afterward of the Netherlands, she resided chiefly at Vienna. The partial fondness of the empress for this favourite daughter increased with her declining years, and she could scarcely dispense with her society.

The Archduchess Amelia was also distinguished among her sisters for talent and personal beauty. On the theatre attached to the palace at Schönbrunn the younger members of the imperial family were accustomed to perform the dramas which Metastasio wrote expressly for them, under the direction of the poet himself. Such actors and actresses were not likely to be severely criticised; but it appears that the Archduchess Amelia generally excelled in these performances, and Metastasio speaks with poetical rapture of her "enchanting voice" and her "angelic figure." She married Don Ferdinand, Duke of Parma, and conducted herself after her marriage with so much levity and indiscretion as to incur the deep displeasure of her mother.

Joanna, who had been affianced at twelve years old to Ferdinand, King of Naples, soon afterward died of the small-pox; and the next sister, Josepha, was destined to supply her place. Her melancholy

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story is, I believe, well known, but so peculiarly illustrates her mother's character and views that it ought not to be omitted here.

The Archduchess Josepha was at the age of fifteen a most beautiful and captivating girl, as lively and innocent as she was lovely, with the tall slight figure, transparent complexion, and long fair hair which distinguished the daughters of the house of Austria; her manners were extremely engaging, and the sweetness and benevolence of her disposition rendered her the favourite of the court. She was publicly betrothed to the King of Naples in September, 1767, assumed the title of queen, and was treated with all the etiquette due to a crowned head; but, far from considering her exaltation with pleasure, she seemed to regard it with a species of horror, and wept incessantly over her approaching separation from her family. While she was suffering under extreme nervous agitation, her mother desired her to visit the family vault under the church of the Capuchins, and perform her devotions for the last time at the tomb of her father. The young queen expressed the utmost repugnance and horror at the idea, and begged to be spared this proof of her filial love. The empress, unused to the slightest resistance on the part of her children, would not allow her authority to be disputed, and reiterated her commands with some severity. Josepha submitted, and, retiring to her own apartment, burst into tears; she took her little sister Marie Antoinette in her arms, and told her plaintively that she was about to leave her, never to return. She then descended into the fatal vault, in obedience to her mother's commands. While there she was seized with a cold shivering, and nearly fainted away; on being brought back to the palace, she sickened the same evening; the next day the small-pox declared itself, and in a few days she was no more. Her mother was overwhelmed with affliction, heightened by all the agony of self-

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reproach. She had nearly abandoned the idea of allowing any of her daughters to ascend the throne of Naples; but after some hesitation she yielded to the representations of Prince Kaunitz, and the next daughter, Caroline, supplied the place vacated by the death of her two elder sisters. She was only fourteen; her young imagination was strongly excited by the death of her sisters; she evinced the utmost abhorrence for an alliance which seemed destined to be fatal to her family, and it required all her mother's authority and the arguments of Prince Kaunitz to vanquish her reluctance. The alluring descriptions of the climate and luxury of Naples, and of the grandeur and homage which awaited her, at length prevailed over her fears, and she was married to Ferdinand in 1768. Caroline had talent as well as beauty; she soon contrived to govern her stupid, good-humoured husband, and, under the guidance of her favourite Acton and the notorious Lady Hamilton, ruled Naples almost absolutely for many years, and precipitated those revolutions in which she has obtained an infamous celebrity.*

The unhappy Marie Antoinette was the youngest daughter of Maria Theresa. She was married to the dauphin, afterward Louis XVI., in 1770; thus was sealed the alliance between Austria and France, and Maria Theresa, who had been engaged for years in accomplishing this great object of her wishes, exulted in the success of her policy. In placing a daughter of her family on the throne of France, she believed that she was securing the predominant influence of Austria in the French cabinet, and that she was rendering, by this grand scheme of policy, the ancient and hereditary rival of her empire subservient to the future aggrandizement of her house. Far different was the result! but Heaven, in mercy or in anger, veiled the future from her eyes. Could

* Forsyth's Italy. Clarke's Travels. Mémoires sur Naples.

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she have beheld the daughter whom she had unconsciously sacrificed dragged to the scaffold, amid the insults of a populace drunk with blood and fury, and a French conqueror dictating terms of peace in her capital,—ay, in her very palace,*—she, even she who bore with such affecting resignation the loss of the husband of her youth, and encountered with heroism the shock of adverse fortune, would perhaps have torn the gray hairs from her head, and died despairing.

It will be seen from this little sketch of Maria Theresa's family, how often amid her political triumphs and intrigues her heart must have bled over her domestic distresses; how often her public cares must have mingled with and imbittered her private sorrows: but constant, engrossing occupation averted many griefs, and a deep sense of religion enabled her to bear others.

It is very amusing to contrast the routine of her private life with that of the heartless, ostentatious Elizabeth, and the disolute, splendid Catherine. Maria Theressa lived in the interior of her palace with great simplicity. In the morning, an old man, who could hardly be entitled a *chamberlain*, but merely what is called on the continent a *frotteur*, entered her sleeping-room about five or six in the morning, opened the shutters, lighted the stove, and arranged the apartment.† She breakfasted on a cup of milk-coffee; then dressed and heard mass. The floor of her room was so contrived, that it opened by a sliding *parquet*, and mass was celebrated in the chapel beneath: thus she assisted at the ceremony without being seen, and with as little trouble and loss of time as possible. She then proceeded to business; every Tuesday she received the ministers

* At Schönbrunn Napoleon dictated the peace of Vienna in 1809.

† For a very curious account of this old *frotteur*, and of the manner in which he was made instrumental in the liberation of Baron Trenck, see Trenck's Memoirs and Thiebault's "Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin."

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of the different departments; other days were set apart for giving audience to foreigners and strangers, who, according to the etiquette of the imperial court, were always presented singly, and received in the private apartments. There were stated days on which the poorest and meanest of her subjects were admitted, almost indiscriminately; and so entire was her confidence in their attachment and her own popularity, that they might whisper to her, or see her alone if they required it. At other times she read memorials, or dictated letters and despatches, signed papers, &c. At noon her dinner was brought in, consisting of a few dishes, served with simplicity: she usually dined alone, like Napoleon; and for the same reason—to economize time. After dinner she was engaged in public business till six; after that hour her daughters were admitted to join in her evening prayer: if they absented themselves, she sent to know if they were indisposed; if not, they were certain of meeting with a maternal reprimand on the following day. At half past eight or nine she retired to rest. When she held a drawing-room or an evening circle, she remained till ten or eleven, and sometimes played at cards. Before the death of her husband she was often present at the masked balls, or *ridottos*, which were given at court during the carnival; afterward, these entertainments and the number of fêtes, or *gala-days*, were gradually diminished in number. During the last years of her life, when she became very infirm, the nobility and foreign ministers generally assembled at the houses of Prince Kaunitz and Prince Collerado.

On the first day of the year, and on her birthday, Maria Theresa held a public court, at which all the nobility, and civil and military officers, who did not obtain access at other times, crowded to kiss her hand. She continued this custom as long as she could support herself in a chair.

Great part of the summer and autumn were spent

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at Schönbrunn, or at Lachsenburg. In the gardens of the former palace there was a little shaded alley, communicating with her apartments. Here, in the summer days, she was accustomed to walk up and down, or sit for hours together: a box was buckled round her waist, filled with papers and memorials, which she read carefully, noting with her pencil the necessary answers or observations to each.

It was the fault or rather the mistake of Maria Theresa to give up too much of her time to the petty details of business; in her government, as in her religion, she sometimes mistook the form for the spirit, and her personal superintendence became at length more like the vigilance of an inspector-general, than the enlightened jurisdiction of a sovereign. She could not, however, be accused of selfishness or vanity in this respect, for her indefatigable attention to business was without parade, and to these duties she sacrificed her pleasures, her repose, and often her health.

Much of her time was employed in devotion; the eighteenth day of every month was consecrated to the memory of her husband;* and the whole month of August was usually spent in retirement, in penance, and in celebrating masses and requiems for the repose of his soul. Those who are "too proud to worship, and too wise to feel," may smile at this; —but others, even those who do not believe in the efficacy of requiems and masses, will respect the source from which her sorrow flowed, and the power whence it sought for comfort. Her superstition has been called, in ridicule, "a womanish superstition;" —it was so in every sense of the word; for it was a superstition, compounded of the strength of love and the consciousness of weakness: but why it should be made a reproach to her memory, or a subject of mockery, I do not understand. Maria

* Francis died on the 18th of August

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Theresa believed, as she had been taught to believe, and walked in the light which had been vouchsafed to her. It is computed that she devoted five hours out of fifteen to her religious duties, and this is related as a thing incredible, and as more becoming a "bigoted abbess than a great sovereign;" but was it too much, that, when declining in years, after having proved in her own person the nothingness of all earthly grandeur, she should give up one-third of her time to prepare for that better world to which she was fast approaching? Alfred, in the prime of life, did the same; and with regard to the puerile and minute observances, the credulity and intolerance which were mingled with her religious feelings, we must remember the system of faith in which she had been educated; the same turn of mind which sent Maria Theresa on a pilgrimage to "our Lady of Heren-haltz,"* or to pray and tell her beads at the sepulchre of her husband, would, in a Protestant country, have made her half a saint, or at least *evangelical*.

Her benevolence of heart is well known. Our books of history and collections of anecdotes are full of stories of her beneficence. She could scarcely endure the sight of suffering in another. Once as she was driving along the streets of Vienna, she saw a poor woman with two children, feebly dragging themselves along, and apparently in a state of starvation; the idea that such destitution and misery should exist under her government appeared to strike her with the deepest anguish and humiliation. "What have I done," she exclaimed, "that Providence should afflict my eyes with such a sight as this!" It need hardly be added, that the poor woman and her family had reason to bless the hour in which

* There was also a certain virgin in one of the churches of Vienna, to whom were attributed the powers of the ancient Lucina; to her Maria Theresa went daily, to pay her devotions, previous to the first confinement of her daughter Marie Antoinette.

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they attracted the notice of the kind-hearted empress. It is said that her annual donations and private charities amounted to more than eighty thousand a year; and her bounties towards all who served her were such, that her son sometimes expostulated. "They accuse me of not being generous," said he; "but if I gave like my mother, we should soon have nothing left to give away."

Her people, who idolized her, knew her weaknesses, and occasionally suffered from them; but they averted their eyes in reverence, as from those of a mother; and since in history the word *weakness* is so often applied to the vices and crimes of a Catherine, we ought to find some softer expression to designate the failings of Maria Theresa, which, if they did not absolutely lean to virtue's side, at least sprang from virtuous principles. We are informed that her watchfulness over the manners and morals of her court and capital degenerated into a love of scandal and gossiping.* Far above all suspicion of frailty herself, she made but little allowance for the indiscretions of others, and her inspection into the conduct of the ladies of the court became at length rigorous and vexatious. She employed spies and emissaries to give her information of all that was passing, and is accused of an unwarrantable curiosity in prying into the secrets of families. In no court were the appearances of virtue so carefully kept up as at Vienna during her reign; any woman, of whatever condition, who openly or boldly violated decorum, was sure to receive an order to quit the capital, and was banished to some distant frontier town of Hungary or Bohemia. It is not, however, denied, that this severity produced more good than evil.

At the time of her husband's death Maria Theresa was still a fine woman, though her person had become rather large and heavy; but about two years after-

* L'Abbé Georgel; Coxe; Wraxall.

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ward she was attacked by the small-pox, a disorder most fatal in her family. She recovered with difficulty, and her face was cruelly disfigured. Still her features retained something of their original form and beauty, until it happened that one day, while travelling from Vienna to Presburg, she was overturned and thrown from her open berline. She fell on her face, which was so much injured and lacerated, that she nearly lost the use of her eyes. After this accident no one could have recognised in her scarred complexion and altered features the least trace of that beauty which had once made the swords of a thousand warriors leap from their scabbards.

We must now resume the thread of political events from the conclusion of the seven years' war to the end of Maria Theresa's long and eventful reign.

After the death of her husband she admitted her son, the emperor Joseph, to the co-regency, or joint government of all her hereditary dominions, without prejudice to her own supreme jurisdiction. They had one court, and their names were united in all the edicts; but what were the exact limits of their respective prerogatives none could tell. The mother and son occasionally differed in opinion; he sometimes influenced her against her better judgment and principles; but during her life she held in some constraint the restless, ambitious, and despotic spirit of the young emperor. The good terms on which they lived together, her tenderness for him, and his dutiful reverence towards her, place the maternal character of Maria Theresa in a very respectable point of view. Prince Kaunitz had the chief direction of foreign affairs, and although the empress placed unbounded confidence in his integrity and abilities, and indulged him in all his peculiarities and absurdities, he was a minister, and not a favourite. He never stood between her and her people, nor was his power like that which Leicester exercised over Elizabeth, Biren

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over the empress Anne, or Potemkin over Catherine II. He could influence, but he never governed her.

From the year 1763 to 1778 there was an interval of profound peace. I extract from the Memoirs of the House of Austria the following account of the civil government of Maria Theresa during the last sixteen years of her reign, because it could neither be more briefly nor more elegantly expressed.

"She founded or enlarged in different parts of her extensive dominions several academies for the improvement of the arts and sciences; instituted numerous seminaries for the education of all ranks of people; reformed the public schools, and ordered prizes to be distributed among the students who made the greatest progress in learning, or were distinguished for propriety of behaviour or purity of morals. She established prizes for those who excelled in different branches of manufacture, in geometry, mining, smelting metals, and even spinning. She particularly turned her attention to the promotion of agriculture, which in a medal struck by her order, was entitled the 'Art which nourishes all other arts,'* and founded a society of agriculture at Milan, with bounties to the peasants who obtained the best crops. She confined the rights of the chase, often so pernicious to the husbandman, within narrow limits, and issued a decree, enjoining all the nobles who kept wild game to maintain their fences in good repair, permitting the peasants to destroy the wild boars which ravaged the fields. She also abolished the scandalous power usurped by the landholders of limiting the season for mowing the grass within the forests and their precincts, and mitigated the feudal servitude of the peasants in Bohemia.

"Among her beneficial regulations must not be omitted the introduction of inoculation, and the establishment of a small-pox hospital. On the

* Arti artium nutrici.

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recovery of her children from a disorder so fatal to her own family, Maria Theresa gave an entertainment which displayed the benevolence of her character. Sixty-five children, who had been previously inoculated at the hospital, were regaled with a dinner in the gallery of the palace at Schönbrunn, in the midst of a numerous court; and Maria Theresa herself, assisted by her offspring, waited on this delightful group, and gave to each of them a piece of money. The parents of the children were treated in another apartment; the whole party was admitted to the performance of a German play, and this charming entertainment was concluded with a dance, which was protracted till midnight.*

"Perhaps the greatest effort made by the empress-queen, and which reflects the highest honour on her memory, was the reformation of various abuses in the church, and the regulations which she introduced into the monasteries.

"She took away the pernicious right which the convents and churches enjoyed of affording an asylum to all criminals without distinction; she suppressed the Inquisition, which, though curbed by the civil power, still subsisted at Milan. She suppressed the society of Jesuits, although her own confessor was a member of that order, but did not imitate the unjust and cruel measures adopted in Spain and Portugal, and softened the rigour of their lot by every alleviation which circumstances would permit."

To these particulars may be added, from other sources of information,† that Maria Theresa was the first sovereign who threw open the royal domain of the Prater to the use of the public. This was one of the most popular acts of her reign. She prevailed on Pope Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) to erase from

* Histoire de Marie Thérèse, p. 218, 219.

† Vie de Marie Thérèse. Georgel.—"Mémoires pour servir," &c Wraxall.

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the calendar many of the saints' days and holydays, which had become so numerous as to affect materially the transactions of business and commerce, as well as the morals of the people. It is curious that this should have proved one of the most unpopular of all her edicts, and was enforced with the utmost difficulty. Great as was the bigotry of Maria Theresa, that of her loving subjects appears to have far exceeded hers. She also paid particular attention to the purity of her coinage, considering it as part of the good faith of a sovereign.*

It must, however, be confessed that all her regulations were not equally praiseworthy and beneficial. For instance, the censorship of the press was rigorous and illiberal, and the prohibition of foreign works, particularly of French and English literature, amounted to a kind of proscription. We are assured that "the far greater number of those books which constitute the libraries of persons distinguished for taste and refinement, not merely in France or England, but even at Rome or Florence, were rigorously condemned, and their entry was attended with no less difficulty than danger." That not only works of an immoral and a rebellious tendency, but "a sentence reflecting on the Catholic religion; a doubt thrown upon the sanctity of some hermit or monk of the middle ages; any publication wherein superstition was attacked or censured, however slightly, was immediately noticed by the police, and prohibited under the severest penalties."

The impediments thus thrown in the way of knowledge and the diffusion of literature, in a great degree neutralized the effect of her munificence in

* On visiting the mint at Milan a few years ago, I found the workmen coining dollars with the head of the empress-queen, and the date 1780. The answer to my inquiries made a strong impression on me even at that time. These dollars were intended for the Levant trade: the people of the Greek islands, being accustomed to trust in the purity of the coinage bearing the effigy of Maria Theresa, took it in exchange more readily than that of any other potentate.

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other instances. It must be allowed that though the rise of the modern German literature, which now holds so high a rank in Europe, dates from the reign of Maria Theresa, it owes nothing to her patronage. Not that, like Frederic II., she held it in open contempt, but that her mind was otherwise engaged. Lessing, Klopstock, Kant, and Winkelman, all lived in her time, but none of them were born her subjects, and they derived no encouragement from her notice and patronage. With regard to those narrow prejudices, which made her dread rebellion, heresy, and schism, in every page of English or French, it may perhaps be some excuse for Maria Theresa, to recollect that her successors, after the lapse of fifty years, are neither more wise, nor more liberal.

But the great stain upon the character and reign of Maria Theresa,—an event which we cannot approach without pain and reluctance,—was the infamous dismemberment of Poland in 1772. The detailed history of this transaction occupies volumes; but the manner in which Maria Theresa became implicated, her personal share in the disgrace attached to it, and all that can be adduced in palliation of her conduct, may be related in very few words.

The empress-queen had once declared that though she might make peace with Frederic, no consideration should ever induce her to enter into an alliance in which he was a party; to prevent the increase of his power, and to guard against his encroaching ambition, his open hostility, or his secret enmity, had long been the ruling principle of the cabinet of Vienna. Under the influence of her son, and of the Russian government, and actuated by motives of interest and expediency, Maria Theresa departed from this line of policy, to which she had adhered for thirty years.

The first idea of dismembering and partitioning

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Poland undoubtedly originated with the court of Prussia.*

The negotiations and arrangements for this purpose were carried on with the profoundest secrecy, and each of the powers concerned was so conscious of the infamy attached to it, and so anxious to cast the largest share of blame upon another, that no event of modern history is involved in more obscurity or more perplexed by contradictory statements and relations. It is really past the power of a plain understanding to attempt to disentangle this dark web of atrocious policy. From the discovery of some of the original documents within the last few years,† a shade of guilt has been removed from the memory of Maria Theresa; for it appears that the treaty which originated with Frederic was settled between Prince Henry of Prussia and Catherine the Second in 1769;‡ and that it was then agreed that if Austria refused to accede to the measure, Russia and Prussia should sign a separate treaty,—league against her, seize upon Poland, and carry the war to her frontiers. Maria Theresa professed to feel great scruples both religious and political, in participating either in the disgrace or advantages of this transaction, but she was overruled by her son and Kaunitz, and she preferred a share of the booty to a terrible and precarious war. That armies should take the field on a mere point of honour, and potentates

* The first person to whom it occurred was Prince Henry of Prussia, the younger brother of Frederic.

† I have been told that they were first brought to light when Napoleon occupied Berlin, in 1806.

‡ According to earlier accounts, Frederic and Maria Theresa had first arranged the treaty, and afterward drew in Catherine to accede to it.

I am anxious to remove a part of the odium from Maria Theresa;—a stain more or less on the character of Catherine is of little consequence. It appears that Prince Henry of Prussia told Ségur that it was entirely arranged between himself and Catherine; and that when he made the proposal, she replied, "C'est un trait de lumière: et si le roi votre frère adopte ce projet, étant d'accord tous deux nous n'avons rien à craindre; ou l'Autriche coopérera à ce partage, ou nous saurons sans peine la forcer à le souffrir."—Ségur, v. ii. p. 126.

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"greatly find quarrel in a straw," is nothing new; but a war undertaken upon a point of honesty, a scruple of conscience,—or from a generous sense of the right opposed to the wrong,—this certainly would have been unprecedented in history, and Maria Theresa did not set the example. When once she had acceded to this scandalous treaty, she was determined, with her characteristic prudence, to derive as much advantage from it as possible, and her demands were so unconscionable, and the share she claimed was so exorbitant, that the negotiation had nearly been broken off by her confederates; at length, a dread of premature exposure, and a fear of the consequent failure, induced her to lower her pretensions, and the treaty for the first partition of Poland was signed at Petersburg on the 3d of August, 1772.

The situation of Poland at this time, divided between a licentious nobility and an enslaved peasantry, torn by faction, desolated by plague and famine, abandoned to every excess of violence, anarchy, and profligacy; the cool audacity of the imperial swindlers, who first deceived and degraded, then robbed and trampled upon that unhappy country; the atrocious means by which an atrocious purpose was long prepared, and at length accomplished; the mixture of duplicity, and cruelty, and bribery; the utter demoralization of the agents and their victims, of the corrupters and the corrupted;—altogether presents a picture which, when contemplated in all its details, fills the mind with loathing and horror. By the treaty of partition, to which a committee of Polish delegates, and the king at their head, were obliged to set their seal, Russia appropriated all the north-eastern part of Poland; Frederic obtained all the district which stretches along the Baltic, called Western Prussia; Maria Theresa seized on a large territory to the south of Poland, including Red Russia, Gallicia, and Lodomeria. The city and palatinate of Cracow and the celebrated salt-mines of Vilitzka were included in her division.

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In reference to Maria Theresa's share in the spoliation of Poland, I cannot forbear to mention one circumstance, and will leave it without a comment. She was particularly indignant against the early aggression of Frederic, as not only unjust and treacherous, but *ungrateful*, since it was owing to the interference of her father, Charles the Sixth, that Frederic had not lost his life either in a dungeon or on a scaffold at the time that he was arrested with his friend Katt.* In the room which Maria Theresa habitually occupied, and in which she transacted business, hung two pictures, and only two; one was the portrait of John Sobieski, King of Poland, whose heroism had saved Vienna when besieged by the Turks in 1683; the other represented her grandfather Leopold, who owed the preservation of his country, his capital, his crown, his very existence, to the intervention of the Poles on that memorable occasion.

After the partition of Poland, Maria Theresa appeared at the height of her grandeur, power, and influence as a sovereign. She had greatly extended her territories; she had an army on foot of 200,000 men; her finances were brought into such excellent order, that notwithstanding her immense expenses, she was able to lay by in her treasury not less than two hundred thousand crowns a year. She lived on terms of harmony with her ambitious, enterprising, and accomplished son and successor, which secured her domestic peace and her political strength; while her subjects blessed her mild sway, and bestowed on her the title of "mother of her people."

The rest of the reign of Maria Theresa is not distinguished by any event of importance till the year 1778, when she was again nearly plunged into a war with her old adversary, Frederic of Prussia.

* Vide Life of Frederic the Great. Katt, as it is well known, was beheaded in his sight; and Frederic had very nearly suffered the fate of Don Carlos,—that of being assassinated by his crack-brained father.

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The occasion was this: the Elector of Bavaria died without leaving any son to succeed to his dominions, and his death was regarded by the court of Vienna as a favourable opportunity to revive certain equivocal claims on the part of the Bavarian territories. No sooner did the intelligence of the elector's indisposition arrive at Vienna than the armies were held in readiness to march. Kaunitz, spreading a map before the empress and her son, pointed out those portions to which he conceived that the claims of Austria might extend; and Joseph, with all the impetuosity of his character, enforced the views and arguments of the minister. Maria Theresa hesitated; she was now old and infirm, and averse from all idea of tumult and war. She recoiled from a design of which she perceived at once the injustice as well as the imprudence; and when at last she yielded to the persuasions of her son, she exclaimed, with much emotion, "In God's name, only take what we have a right to demand! I foresee that it will end in war; my wish is to end my days in peace."

No sooner was a reluctant consent wrung from her than the Austrians entered Bavaria, and took forcible possession of the greatest part of the electorate.

The King of Prussia was not inclined to be a quiet spectator of this scheme of aggrandizement on the part of Austria, and immediately prepared to interfere and dispute her claims to the Bavarian succession. Though now seventy years of age, time had but little impaired either the vigour of his mind or the activity of his frame; still, with him "the deed o'ertook the purpose," and his armies were assembled and had entered Bohemia before the court of Vienna was apprized of his movements.

To Frederic was opposed the young Emperor Joseph, at the head of a more numerous force than had ever before taken the field under the banners of Austria, supported by the veteran generals Loudon and

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Lacy, and burning for the opportunity, which his mother's prudence had hitherto denied him, to distinguish himself by some military exploit, and encounter the enemy of his family on the field of battle.

But how different were all the views and feelings of the aged empress! how changed from what they had been twenty years before! She regarded the approaching war with a species of horror; her heart still beat warm to all her natural affections; but hatred, revenge, ambition,—sentiments which had rather been awakened there by circumstances than native to her disposition,—were dead within her. When the troops from different parts of her vast empire assembled at Vienna, and marched with all their military ensigns past the windows of her palace, she ordered her shutters to be closed. Her eyes were constantly suffused with tears, her knees continually bent in prayer. Half-conscious of the injustice of her cause, she scarcely dared to ask a blessing on her armies; she only hoped by supplication to avert the immediate wrath of Heaven.

Her son-in-law, Albert of Saxony, had a command in the imperial army, and, bound in honour to the Austrian cause, it might possibly have become a part of his military duty to assist in desolating his native country. His wife, the Archduchess Christina, who sympathized in all the feelings of her husband, deprecated the idea of a war which must place him in a dilemma so painful and perplexing; but the influence of the Emperor Joseph overpowered hers. All the preparations for the campaign being completed, the emperor and his brother Maximilian set off for the camp at Olmutz in April, 1778. When they waited on the empress to take their leave and receive her parting benediction, she held them long in her arms, weeping bitterly; and when the emperor at length tore himself from her embraces, she nearly fainted away.

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During the next few months she remained in the interior of her palace, melancholy and anxious, but not passive and inactive. She was revolving the means of terminating a war which she detested. Her evident reluctance seems to have paralyzed her generals; for the whole of this campaign, which had opened with such tremendous preparations, passed without any great battle or any striking incident except the capture of Habelschwert, which, as it opened a passage into Silesia, was likely to be followed by important consequences. When Colonel Palavicini arrived at Vienna with the tidings of this event, and laid the standards taken from the enemy at the feet of the empress, she received him with complacency; but when he informed her that the town and inhabitants of Habelschwert had suffered much from the fury of the troops, she opened her bureau, and taking out a bag containing five hundred ducats, "I desire," said she, "that this sum may be distributed in my name among the unfortunate sufferers whose houses or effects have been plundered by my soldiery; it will be of some little use and consolation to them under their misfortunes."

There were some who admired, and some who censured, this display of generosity towards an enemy's town; but when we consider the thoughts and designs which Maria Theresa was now revolving, we may easily suppose that there might be a mixture of policy as well as a great deal of real benevolence in this action.

She still retained something of the firmness and decision of her former years; age, which had subdued her haughty spirit, had not enfeebled her powers; and in this emergency she took the only measures left to avert the miseries of a terrible and unjust war. Unknown to her son, and even without the knowledge of Kaunitz, she acted for herself and for her people, with a degree of independence, resolution, and good feeling, which awakens our best

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sympathies, and fills us with admiration both for the sovereign and the woman. She despatched a confidential officer with a letter addressed to the King of Prussia, in which she avowed her regret that in their old age Frederic and herself "should be about to tear the gray hairs from each other's head."* "I perceive," said she, "with extreme sensibility, the breaking out of a new war. My age and my earnest desire for maintaining peace are well known; and I cannot give a more convincing proof than by the present proposal. My maternal heart is justly alarmed for the safety of my two sons and my son-in-law, who are in the army. I have taken this step without the knowledge of my son the emperor, and I entreat, whatever may be the event, that you will not divulge it. I am anxious to recommence and terminate the negotiation hitherto conducted by the emperor, and broken off to my extreme regret. This letter will be delivered to you by Baron Thugut, who is intrusted with full powers. Ardently hoping that it may fulfil my wishes conformably to my dignity, I entreat you to join your efforts with mine to re-establish between us harmony and good intelligence, for the benefit of mankind and the interest of our respective families."†

This letter enclosed proposals of peace on moderate terms. The king's answer is really honourable to himself as well as to the empress-queen.

"Baron Thugut has delivered to me your imperial majesty's letter, and no one is or shall be acquainted with his arrival. It was worthy of your majesty's character to give these proofs of magnanimity and moderation in a litigious cause, after having so heroically maintained the inheritance of your ancestors. The tender attachment which you display for your son the emperor and the princes of your blood deserves the applause of every feeling mind, and aug-

* Her own words.

† Coxe's Memoirs of the House of Austria, vol. ii. p. 531.

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ments, if possible, the high consideration which I entertain for your sacred person. I have added some articles to the propositions of Baron Thugut, most of which have been allowed, and others will, I hope, meet with little difficulty. He will immediately depart for Vienna, and will be able to return in five or six days, during which time I will act with such caution that your imperial majesty may have no cause of apprehension for the safety of any part of your family, and particularly of the emperor, whom I love and esteem, although our opinions differ in regard to the affairs of Germany."

It is pleasing to see these two sovereigns, after thirty-eight years of systematic hostility, mutual wrongs, and personal aversion, addressing each other in terms so conciliatory, and which, as the event showed, were at this time sincere.

The accommodation was not immediately arranged. Frederic demurred on some points, and the Emperor Joseph, when made acquainted with the negotiation, was indignant at the concessions which his mother had made, and which he deemed humiliating; as if it *could* be humiliating to undo wrong, to revoke injustice, to avert crime, and heal animosities. But Maria Theresa was not discouraged, nor turned from her generous purpose. She was determined that the last hours of her reign should not, if possible, be stained by bloodshed or disturbed by tumult. She implored the mediation of the Empress of Russia. She knew that the reigning foible of the imperial Catherine, like that of the plebeian Pompadour, was vanity,—intense, all-absorbing vanity,—and might be soothed and flattered by the same means. She addressed to her, therefore, an eloquent letter, in which praise, and deference, and argument were so well mingled, and so artfully calculated to win that vainglorious but accomplished woman, that she receded from her first design of supporting the King of Prussia, and consented to in-

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terfere as mediatrix. After a long negotiation and many difficulties, which Maria Theresa met and overcame with firmness and talent worthy of her brightest days, the peace was signed at Teschen, in Saxony, on the 13th of May, the birthday of the empress-queen.

Maria Theresa was often heard to declare that no event of her long reign had ever caused her such unmingled satisfaction as the peace of Teschen; she might have added, that no action of her long life ever did her so much honour. It was a peace bought without effusion of blood; it was entirely her own work, undertaken and carried through upon the most righteous and benevolent principles, and Heaven had blessed it accordingly. When the intelligence was brought to Vienna that Frederic had agreed to the conditions of peace, she burst into tears, and exclaimed, in a broken voice, "I am overpowered with joy! I do not love Frederic, but I must do him the justice to confess that he has acted nobly and honourably. He promised me that he would make peace upon reasonable terms, and he has kept his word. I am inexpressibly happy to spare the effusion of so much blood!" She then repaired to the church of the Capuchins, and returned public thanks to God for the restoration of peace.

The treaty of Teschen was the last political event of Maria Theresa's reign in which she was actively and personally concerned. Her health had been for some time declining, and for several months previous to her death she was unable to move from her chair without assistance. An English traveller, who was introduced to her about this time, describes her as an old lady, immensely corpulent, habited in the deepest weeds, with her gray hair slightly powdered, and turned back under a cap of black crape. Notwithstanding her many infirmities, her deportment was still dignified, her manner graceful as well as gracious, and her countenance benign.

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The disorder from which she suffered was a dropsy, accompanied by an induration of the lungs, which brought on fits of suffocation, and at length terminated her existence.

She had long accustomed herself to look death steadily in the face, and when the hour of trial came, her resignation, her fortitude, and her humble trust in Heaven never failed her. She preserved to the last her self-possession and her strength of mind, and betrayed none of those superstitious terrors which might have been expected and pardoned in Maria Theresa.

Her agonies during the last ten days of her life were terrible, but never drew from her a single expression of complaint or impatience. She was only apprehensive lest her reason and her physical strength might fail her together. She was once heard to say, "God grant that these sufferings may soon terminate, for otherwise I know not if I can much longer endure them." On recovering from a fit of insensibility caused by the violence of pain, she found her son the emperor standing near her dissolved in tears. "Spare me, my son," said she; "my own sufferings do not subdue me; but the sight of your affliction will take away all my firmness!"

After receiving the last sacraments, she summoned all her family to her presence, and solemnly recommended them to the care of the emperor. "My son," said she, "as you are the heir to all my worldly possessions, I cannot dispose of them; but my children are still, as they have ever been, my *own*. I bequeath them to you; be to them a father. I shall die contented if you promise to take that office upon you." She then turned to her son Maximilian and her daughters, blessed them individually in the tenderest terms, and exhorted them to obey and honour their elder brother as their father and sovereign. Perceiving that they were quite overpowered with emotion, she added, calmly, "Retire into the next room, and recover your spirits."

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Until the evening preceding her death, she was engaged in signing papers, and in giving her last advice and directions to her successor; and when, perceiving her exhausted state, her son entreated her to take some repose, she replied steadily, "In a few hours I shall appear before the judgment-seat of God, and would you have me sleep?"

She expressed great anxiety lest those who had long been aided or supported by her private charities should be left destitute, and, in explaining her wishes on this subject, she added, "If I could wish for immortality on earth, it would only be for the power of relieving the distressed."

A short time before she breathed her last she had fallen apparently into a slumber; and as she lay reclined for some time with her eyes closed, one of the attendants said, in a low whisper, "The empress sleeps." She immediately opened her eyes: "No," said she, "I do not sleep; *I wish to meet my death awake!*" There is no death-bed speech upon record more simply, more unaffectedly sublime than these words.

After repeated fits of agony and suffocation, endured to the last with the same invariable serenity and patience, death at length released her, and she expired on the 29th of November, 1780, in her sixty-fourth year.

The English minister at Vienna (Sir Robert Keith) describes in strong terms the universal grief for her loss. "Since the death of the empress, every thing in this capital wears the face of heartfelt affliction. Every hour brings to the public some additional instance of the astonishing fortitude and unremitting beneficence which accompanied her even to the last agonies of death." "I have lost," says Metastasio, in one of his letters, "I have lost my august and ever-adorable patroness, benefactress, and mother; a loss for which I never hope to be consoled!" And it is, in truth, most worthy of remark, that the re

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grets of her family and her people did not end with the pageant of her funeral, nor were obliterated by the new interests, new hopes, new splendours of a new reign. Years after her death she was still remembered with tenderness and respect, and her subjects dated events from the time of their "mother" the empress. The Hungarians, who regarded themselves as her own especial people, still distinguish their country from Austria and Bohemia, by calling it the "territory of the queen."

The earthly dower of Maria Theresa was certainly the richest ever granted to a mortal. A strong mind and a feeling heart, royalty and beauty, long life and prosperity, a happy marriage, a numerous family, her people's love, the admiration of the universe! These were hers; and her biographers generally sum up her character by justly styling her the most blameless and beneficent sovereign who ever wore a crown. With equal truth they assert that the errors and the weaknesses which tarnish her great and good qualities were either rendered excusable by circumstances, or were almost inseparable from her sex and from humanity. But while we excuse them, may we not lament that the consequences of these venial errors and frailties were not confined within a smaller circle? May we not grieve that the feminine mistakes, passions, and antipathies of an amiable woman should cost humanity so dear? should arm nations against each other? should lead her into the commission of monstrous injustice? should have power to suppress knowledge, perpetuate prejudice, and check the intellectual improvement of a whole people? For all this is true,—as true as that the real elevation of her mind and the warm and genuine affections of her heart rendered her one of the most admirable and amiable of women.

Among the descendants of Maria Theresa now living (1831), may be mentioned Marie Amélie, the

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present Queen of France, and the Duchess d'Angoulême, who are both her granddaughters; the Duchess de Berri, and Marie Louise, the widow of Napoleon, who are both her great-granddaughters. Including the families of the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of France and Naples, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, the Duke of Modena, and the ex-emperor of Brazil, the descendants of Maria Theresa probably amount to between seventy and eighty princes and princesses.

CATHERINE II.

As Russia presents during the last century the very extraordinary spectacle of an empire, as vast as that of the Assyrians of old, under the despotic sway of five women successively,* it is only justice to Catherine the Second, as well as to the peculiar subject of this little book, to pass her female predecessors in review before us.

In a state of barbarism, extremes in manners, morals, and government meet and mingle. Before the time of Peter the Great the women of Russia were considered as an inferior order of beings; for instance, in a census of the population the men were denominated *souls*, but the appellation was never given to the women. They never ate in presence of their husbands, nor ever mingled in the same amusements; great part of the most laborious occupations fell upon the females; if they were not absolutely incarcerated or secluded after the Turkish fashion, they seem to have been treated much as the North American Indians treat their squaws. The great Peter, in his usually persuasive manner, kicked,

* Catherine I.; Anne; the Regent Anne, mother of Ivan; Elizabeth; Catherine II.; with an interval of only a few months between Catherine I. and Anne, and between Elizabeth and Catherine II.

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cudgelled, and knouted his loving subjects into something more of gallantry; but he who beheld with such indignation, and avenged with such frightful barbarity, the ambitious interference of his sister Sophia, could scarcely have anticipated the transformation of his iron sceptre into a distaff. It was not by the will of Peter, but by the machinations of Menzikoff, that his celebrated widow Catherine I. succeeded him in 1725. Her story is one of the romances of history; her government, one of its most disgraceful pages; her reign of two years was, in truth, the reign of Menzikoff, her former lover; no measures, either public or domestic, appear to have emanated from her will. She could neither read nor write; she hated business; and, released from the restraint and apprehension in which she was kept by that sublime savage her husband, in spite of all her power over him, she abandoned herself to indolence and to a most irregular and profligate life. She fell at length into habits of intoxication, which shortened her existence, and died prematurely at the age of thirty-nine.

On the death of Peter II., a boy of fourteen, who reigned nominally for a few months, Anne, the niece of Peter I., was placed on the throne; she reigned ten years, or rather Biren, her favourite and chamberlain, reigned in her name. He governed her as absolutely and as sternly as Carraccioli governed Joanna II. of Naples. It availed but little to her unfortunate people that Anne herself had the same mild temper which distinguished Joanna, whom she also resembled in her weakness and her passiveness. Her arrogant and cruel favourite banished more than twenty thousand persons into the wilds of Siberia, besides those who perished on the scaffold, and suffered other punishments more or less cruel. The empress was occasionally known to plead with tears for some of these wretched sufferers, and plead in vain; and Biren, like Carraccioli, is said to have

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struck his imbecile mistress when she ventured to dispute his wishes.

It was in the reign of the Empress Anne that the far-famed palace of ice was erected on the banks of the Neva. This truly imperial toy was constructed in honour of the nuptials of Prince Galitzen with a princess of the house of Dolgorucki, and jestingly intended as a mansion to receive the bride and bridegroom. It cost some millions of rubles, yet would have deserved to be forgotten if it had not suggested a descriptive passage in Cowper's "Task," as gorgeous as fairy-like, but much more lasting than itself.*

Anne closed a life, as unhappy and insignificant as her reign was mischievous and disgraceful, in 1740. Biren endeavoured to prolong his power by proclaiming the young Prince Ivan as emperor, by the title of Ivan III., and declared himself regent. The mother of the infant prince was Anne of Mecklenburg, granddaughter of Ivan, the eldest brother of Peter the Great. Instigated by her husband, she seized upon the regency, arrested Biren in the height of his power, and sent him to Siberia. She governed Russia as regent for about a year, and is represented as a woman of mild character, but without any one quality which could enable her to conduct a government. Her very virtues turned against her, for having from a feeling of humanity rejected the proposal to arrest her cousin Elizabeth, this princess, by a sudden revolution caused by the revolt of a few guards, was placed on the throne in December, 1741. Ivan and his parents were imprisoned during the remainder of their lives; the former was

* "——No forest fell,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
T' enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave:
Silently as a dream the fabric rose." &c.

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immured in the dungeon of Schlusselburgh, and his family in a fortress near Archangel, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

Some of the circumstances attending the deposition of the young emperor were very picturesque and characteristic. When the soldiers sent to arrest him reached his apartment, they found him asleep in his cradle (he was then about eighteen months old), and, not presuming to wake him, they stood round him motionless and silent, while the poor unconscious infant slumbered on. In about an hour he opened his eyes, and one of these fierce men immediately seized him; but others disputing with their comrade the honour of carrying the infant emperor, the child became terrified, and began to cry, on which they desisted, and suffered his nurse to bear him. On being brought before Elizabeth, she took him in her arms, kissed him, and while she was caressing him the soldiers below shouted "Hourra, Elizaveta!" Pleased with the noise, the child clapped his little hands, laughed, and tried to imitate the sounds he heard, even in the arms of his destroyer. Elizabeth, much affected, melted into tears, exclaiming, "Poor little creature! thou little knowest that thou art trying to speak against thyself!" She then, with the tears yet wet on her cheek, resigned him from her arms to a perpetual dungeon.

Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I., was in her thirty-second year when she was proclaimed empress, and reigned twenty years, from 1741 to 1761. She possessed neither the genius of her father nor the strength of mind which had distinguished and elevated her mother; but she appears to have been endued by nature with every gentle and attractive quality of her sex. Beautiful in person, gracious and popular in manners, to look upon her was to love her; her disposition was tenderness itself; and she began her reign by pronouncing the well-known vow, "Never

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to put a subject to death upon any provocation whatever."

Whether there be something in the possession of unlimited power which tends to corrupt the best of natures, or whether the foibles of Elizabeth, which in private life would scarcely have detracted from the general amiability of her character, became aggravated into vices by indulgence, it is certain that no sovereign of whom we read in history has left behind a reputation more thoroughly odious. That she was a woman "naturally born to fears," that she was timid, susceptible, indolent, and much fonder of pleasure than of managing fleets, finances, and armies, could hardly, as a woman, be objected to her; but conceive such a sovereign at the head of a vast and complicated scheme of government, the least details of which she could scarce comprehend, holding in her feeble and negligent hands the destinies of millions of human beings! What a picture! Her timidity, irritated by continual and very natural terrors for her own safety, rendered her suspicious and cruel; and her inclination for pleasure, unchecked by any restraint whatever, sunk her into the most shameless profligacy. Two unworthy favourites, her minister Bestucheff and her lover Razumofsky, managed the whole government; and never were more wretches tortured, knouted to death, mutilated, and banished to Siberia than in the reign of this *merciful* empress, who, mingling bigotry, licentiousness, and cruelty with a kind of maudlin sentimentality, never heard of a battle or signed a warrant against a criminal without shedding tears. The last ten years of her life were spent in fits of terror, fits of love, fits of devotion, and fits of intoxication; her excesses at length brought on disorders which terminated her disgraceful existence, and she died literally with a cup of brandy at her lips.*

* Vide Life of Catherine II.

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Elizabeth, in order to deprive the family of Ivan of all hope of the succession, had early in her reign declared her nephew Peter the heir to her throne.* She created him Grand-duke of Russia, and he was brought up in her court from the age of thirteen; but from the moment she had caused him to be acknowledged her successor, she regarded this unfortunate boy with terror, dislike, and suspicion. She was in continual apprehension of some revolution in his favour; she kept him in a subordinate situation; she surrounded him with spies and mean ignorant persons; she not only neglected his education, but with a detestable policy, the result of her feminine jealousies and fears, she gave him advisedly such an education as would tend to weaken and corrupt his mind. One of the bedchamber women attending on Elizabeth, who had long been attached to the imperial family, and had an affection for the grand-duke, once ventured to remonstrate against this base and ungenerous system. One evening, as she was undressing the empress, she turned the conversation on Peter, which was not difficult, from the avidity with which Elizabeth encouraged every species of scandal concerning him. "If your majesty," said this faithful and courageous woman, "do not permit the prince to know any thing of what is necessary for governing the country, what do you think will become of him? and what do you think will become of the empire?" Elizabeth, turning round, fixed her eyes upon her attendant: "Joanna," said she, in a slow and ominous tone, "*knowest thou the road to Siberia?*" Joanna knew it so well that she took the hint, and never ventured to repeat her remonstrance.

In 1747 Elizabeth married her nephew to the daughter of the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst.† This ex-

* Anne, the eldest daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine, had married the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Peter was the only issue of this marriage.

† The true reason which induced Elizabeth to select this young prin-

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traordinary woman was born at Stettin, in Prussia, May 2d, 1729, and consequently was not more than eighteen when she was brought by her mother to Petersburg to be united to the Grand-duke of Russia. She had hitherto borne the name of Sophia Augusta Frederica, but, on abjuring the Lutheran religion, she was rebaptized according to the Russian law and the rites of the Greek church, and took the name of Catherine Alexiena. At the period of her marriage she was graceful, lively, and accomplished, full of talent and ambition. Peter, who had naturally a better heart, and an understanding not much inferior to that of his wife, had been spoiled, almost brutalized, by a bad education. Although some degree of attachment had at first existed between them, it was not of long duration. Catherine was disgusted by the rudeness, ignorance, and low tastes of her husband; while he appears to have been alternately enchanted by her graces, abashed by her superiority, and enraged by her infidelities. Already he entertained the idea of divorcing his wife, and she already meditated, if not the destruction of her husband, at least the overthrow of his power; when the death of the feeble, cruel, and profligate Elizabeth raised her nephew to the throne, by the title of Peter III.

The first acts of his reign displayed both good sense and beneficence. He revenged himself on no one, though he had reason to complain of many; he treated the Empress Catherine with great deference and kindness, and seemed proud of the grace and dignity with which she enacted the part of sovereign, and played off those airs of royalty in which he was himself greatly deficient. But Catherine, who well knew the real instability of his mind and the violence of his temper, either would not or could not

cess was, the remembrance of her early attachment for Catherine's uncle, to whom she had been betrothed, but who died before the union was solemnized. Elizabeth for his sake abjured marriage, and, it is said, never afterward mentioned him but with tears. *Au reste*, she certainly did not pique herself on fidelity to his memory.

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trust him. She made no attempt to regain his affections, or to direct and assist him by her superior talents and firmness. Meantime, the conspiracy for depriving the czar of his throne gained new partisans every day; for after the first few months he fell into his old habits of intemperance, betrayed his dislike and indifference towards his wife in a very insulting manner, and was guilty of the strangest acts of folly and imprudence.

There were three separate conspiracies against the unfortunate Peter; and Catherine, while she appeared to do nothing of herself, was in reality the mover of all. The principal persons concerned, besides the empress, were Count Panin, the preceptor of her son Paul; her lover, Gregory Orloff, and his brother Alexey, two officers in the guards; Razumoffsky, the hetman or commander of the Cossacks; and the Princess Dashkoff, then about eighteen, a young woman of masculine abilities and resolution, and devotedly attached to the Empress Catherine, who in return professed a great affection for her, and artfully flattered her ambition with the most brilliant promises. All these were agreed in the project of dethroning the czar; but while Orloff and the Princess Dashkoff wished to confer the supreme authority on Catherine, Panin and Razumoffsky thought this was hazarding too much, and advised that she should govern as regent, in the name of her son Paul.

While things were in this situation, and Catherine under the daily apprehension of seeing her schemes betrayed, herself arrested, repudiated, or even put to death, she never lost her presence of mind; though of course there were moments when conscious guilt, and terror, and suspense must have agonized her soul, she maintained the same unvarying serenity in her countenance and deportment. The conspirators waited only for a favourable moment to strike the first blow, and this was precipitated by an unexpected accident.

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Peter, who was preparing to set out on a military expedition against Denmark, had gone to spend a few days at his country palace of Oranienbaum, whence he was to proceed to the palace of Peterhof; and there, as affording greater facilities for the purpose, the conspirators intended to seize and carry off the emperor. In the mean time, a soldier in the guards, who had been gained over, innocently asked his captain on what day they were to take up arms against the emperor? The captain, who knew nothing of the conspiracy, was immediately alarmed, and gave notice to his superiors. One of the most violent of the conspirators, on being arrested, had just time to write with his pencil on a slip of paper, "Proceed to execution this instant, or we are undone!" and the note was carried to the Princess Dashkoff. It was then nine at night. She immediately gave intelligence to her party, and their measures were hastily concerted, and as quickly carried into execution. The empress was sleeping at Peterhof,* where she had taken up her residence to meet and receive her husband, that being the spot chosen for his betrayal. About two o'clock in the morning Catherine was roused from her sleep, and perceived a soldier standing by her bedside: it was Alexey Orloff. He merely said, "Your majesty has not a moment to lose; rise, and follow me!" He then disappeared. She called her confidential maid Ivanovna; they dressed themselves in haste; the soldier returned and led them to the garden-gate, where a carriage stood waiting; the empress and the maid being placed in it, Alexey seized the reins, and they set off at a full gallop. They had not proceeded far when the horses fell, and Catherine was obliged to alight and walk. Every moment's delay increased their danger, but she did not lose her courage or her spirits; she was resolved to proceed

* About twenty miles from Petersburg.

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to Petersburg on foot. She had walked about a mile when they met a peasant driving a country cart. Alexey Orloff immediately seized the horses, placed the empress in the cart, and thus drove her to the capital, where she arrived almost exhausted with fatigue, but still with an unbroken spirit, at seven in the morning.

She immediately presented herself to the soldiers, and in a speech assured them that the czar, her husband, had intended to put her and her son to death that very night, and that she had no other means of escaping but by throwing herself on their protection. This falsehood was believed at the moment, and the men swore they would die in her defence. Several regiments of guards, who had been gained over by the conspirators, now surrounded her; the Orloffs and a few others raised a cry of "Long live the Empress Catherine!" and the soldiers threw up their caps, and echoed it with shouts. The officers who were in the secret encouraged them; while those who were not were so confused and intimidated, they dared not oppose the torrent. One officer, Villebois, the general of artillery, ventured to remonstrate; on which Catherine, turning round haughtily, told him she did not want his advice, but to know what he intended to do. The general was so confounded by her assumed air of command, that he could only stammer out "To obey your majesty!" and immediately delivered the arsenals and magazines of the city into her hands. Thus in two hours did Catherine find herself called to the throne, with an army at her command, and the capital at her feet.

In the afternoon the Archbishop of Novogorod put the crown on her head, *Te Deum* was sung in all the churches, and nearly the whole city took the oath of allegiance. It is a remarkable fact, that in the course of this eventful day not a drop of blood was shed; a few officers only were put under arrest. When the Chancellor Vorontzoff ventured to repre-

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sent the dangers to which she exposed herself, and the hazard of success, Catherine replied, with an inconceivable mixture of hypocrisy and impudence, "You see how it is; I really cannot do otherwise, I am only yielding to the ardent sensibility of my people!" and she sent the chancellor to his own house, with a guard over him. Vorontzoff was the father of the Princess Dashkoff, but had hitherto been a steady adherent of the emperor.

While these extraordinary transactions were taking place in the capital, Peter the Third, in full security and ignorance, had ordered his carriage to proceed from Oranienbaum to Peterhof, where he was met by the news of the revolution. He was seized with a degree of horror and confusion which took away the use of his faculties. He had with him the brave field-marshal Munich, who alone was equal to an army; and had Peter taken the advice of this faithful friend and veteran general, he would have saved himself, and probably have effected a counter-revolution; but, surrounded by clamorous women and false friends who had sold or betrayed him, he was stunned and perplexed by contradictory counsels; he could resolve on nothing, and his imbecility was like that of a terrified child. Several expedients were proposed and abandoned, and confusion and dismay spread among his servants and followers. At last, he sat down and wrote a submissive letter to Catherine, acknowledging his errors, and proposing to share the sovereign authority with her. She made no answer either to this or to two successive letters which he despatched, entreating her clemency; but she sent Count Panin to him, who persuaded this infatuated prince to sign a declaration that he was not fit to reign, and that he voluntarily abdicated the throne. The same evening he was conveyed under a strong guard to the palace of Ropscha; while there, he petitioned Catherine to let him have an old negro buffoon who amused him,

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a favourite dog, his violin, a Bible, and a few romances. None of these requests were granted, and his petition was only made the subject of ridicule.

It was necessary that some apparent reason should be given for such extraordinary proceedings; a short manifesto was accordingly set forth, proclaiming the accession of Catherine, without any mention of the unhappy emperor; but alleging as her only motives for assuming the government her tender regard for the welfare of the people, and, above all, for the holy and orthodox Greek religion, which she feared was exposed to total ruin; and this notable document of state villany thus concludes:—"For these causes, &c., we, putting our trust in Almighty God and in his divine justice, have ascended the imperial throne of all the Russias, and have received a solemn oath of fidelity from all our faithful subjects." Dated June 28, 1762.*

Thus, by a revolution which never could have occurred under any other government than that of Russia, which few could account for, and no one seemed to comprehend,—which was accomplished in the course of a single day, without injury to individuals, and without tumultuous violence,—did a young woman, a foreigner, a stranger to the imperial blood, spring into the throne of the czars. The nobles of Russia, accustomed to such scenes, received their new yoke without surprise; the ignorant, barbarous populace looked on quite passively; Europe wondered,—but it was only the first scene of that stupendous melodrama which Catherine was about to exhibit on the theatre of the world. Her usurpation had been effected with the most extraordinary facility, and with the suddenness of a dream. With equal rapidity she might have been hurled from a throne of which she had possessed herself no one could tell how, or why, or wherefore. "To be thus

* Coxe's Account of the Revolution of 1762.

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was nothing, but to be *safely* thus!" There were three human beings who stood between her and security; and the first, the immediate victim, was necessarily her wretched husband. Peter had many friends; the troops about his person, particularly his Holstein guards, had been devotedly attached to him, and beheld his downfall with grief and indignation.* Others were discontented because Catherine, instead of governing in the name of her son Paul (now about eight years old), had boldly seized the empire for herself, without even alluding to the grand-duke since the first day. There were murmurs and symptoms of insubordination at Petersburg, and at Moscow the proclamation of the change of government had been received, both by the nobles and populace, with a sullen silence. The situation of Catherine was fearfully critical, nor can we wonder that she passed several nights without sleep, and was even known to steal from her bed, and walk up and down like a condemned spirit. The sceptre trembled in her hand, for, hardened as she afterward became, she was yet a woman, and that hand was as yet unstained with blood; but she had Orloff and the Princess Dashkoff at her side to whisper, "*Thus thou must do* wouldst thou have it!"† and though her energies might need masculine support, her ambition required no prompter.

Seven days after the accession of Catherine, Peter was assassinated at Ropscha, where he was confined. The manner of his death long remained a mystery, and Catherine's participation at least uncertain, though universally suspected; but now that the whole circumstances of this horrible catastrophe have been disclosed, it seems scarcely possible to

* Peter's Holstein guards were embarked on board a vessel to be carried back to their own country. The vessel went to pieces within sight of shore, and all perished; no one was *permitted* to aid them. That this was contrived is certain; whether with or without the connivance of Catherine is doubtful.

† Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 5.

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acquit her. It appears that Alexey Orloff and Baratinsky, assisted by a certain Lieutenant Passek,* had the charge of the emperor, and when his death was finally resolved on, they, who could look for no mercy if once he reascended his throne, were easily persuaded to become his executioners. They first attempted to make him swallow poison; they had administered one dose of the fatal beverage in a glass of brandy, and endeavoured to force upon him another, but the unhappy prince, aware of their purpose, resisted, mingling reproaches with entreaties for mercy. He called for milk to allay the agonizing pains he began to suffer, and they again pressed the poison upon him. One of his valets, a Frenchman, now rushed in, alarmed by his cries and expostulations. Peter immediately ran towards him and threw himself into his arms, exclaiming with a faint voice, "It was not enough to deprive me of the throne of Russia!—I must now be murdered!" The valet attempted to remonstrate, and to supplicate for mercy, but he was forced out of the room, and the work of death was accomplished; but not speedily: the unfortunate czar, perceiving that his fate was resolved, defended himself for a while with the strength of despair. Though Alexey Orloff was one of the most powerful and gigantic men in Russia, he with difficulty overmastered his victim: he was at length, after a fierce and terrible struggle for existence, flung to the earth, and strangled with a napkin snatched from the dining-table.

When the assassins had completed their purpose, Alexey Orloff mounted his horse, and galloped to Petersburg. He found the empress on the point of holding a court, and hastily divulged his errand: the news was not suffered to transpire till proper precautions were taken, and Catherine proceeded with a firm step and unchanged countenance to the pres-

* Since created a count, a general, and the governor of a province.

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ence-chamber, where she gave audience with every appearance of cheerfulness and tranquillity. The next day, while the empress was dining in public, the death of the deposed czar from sudden indisposition was formally announced. She immediately arose from table all bathed in tears, retired with her handkerchief at her eyes, and for several days exhibited the usual symptoms of an "unfelt sorrow."

She afterward published a manifesto, in which she announced to her passive subjects, "that it had pleased Almighty God to remove the late Emperor Peter the Third from this world, by a violent attack of a malady to which he had heretofore been subject, and desiring them to consider it as an especial act of Providence working in her favour." None were stupid enough to believe this impudent piece of hypocrisy and profaneness, but none were bold enough to contradict it, and this was sufficient to answer Catherine's purpose.

After the death of Peter the Third, there remained alive two other individuals whose connexion with the imperial family of the czars was calculated to give Catherine some uneasiness. The first of these was the unhappy Prince Ivan, who had been deposed in his cradle, and had now passed three-and-twenty years in a dungeon. Peremptory orders were given, that on the slightest attempt made to deliver him he should be put to death. About two years after Catherine's accession, such an attempt was made by an officer named Mirovitch, who forced his way into the fortress where the young prince was confined, with the resolution to deliver him. The jailers obeyed their orders, and stabbed Ivan in his dungeon. When his body, pierced with wounds, was shown to the conspirators, Mirovitch immediately threw down his sword, and surrendered; and he was afterward executed with some of his confederates.

The other person whose existence and whose pretensions were likely to disturb the tranquillity of

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Catherine was a natural daughter of the late Empress Elizabeth,* who had been brought up privately by the name of the Princess Tarakanoff. She was then living at Rome, under the care of a kind of governess, and protected and supported by the Polish Prince Radzivil. The empress employed her favourite, Alexey Orloff, to get the young princess into her power. By a stratagem, the most detestable that ever was conceived by a depraved and cruel mind, Alexey first won the heart and confidence of this unfortunate girl, then deceived her into a pretended marriage, and decoyed her on board a Russian vessel, in the port of Leghorn: she was conveyed in fetters to Russia, and there thrown into a dungeon, where she perished miserably. It is said that she was drowned; but by what means, or at what time her death took place, was never certainly known.

These were the means by which Catherine secured a throne to which she had no right whatever, either by hereditary descent, or the voice of the people. The power which was founded in blood was necessarily cemented with blood: but it is justice to Catherine to add, that she was not disposed to commit unnecessary atrocities: she had sufficient good sense to perceive that a show of justice and benevolence to her people would strengthen her government; and that a display of magnificence and spirit would at once dazzle her own subjects, win the respect and support of neighbouring nations, and turn the attention of the world from the steps by which she had ascended to her height of power.

The mere chronology of Catherine's long reign, the wars in which she was engaged, her relations of amity or commerce with the surrounding nations, from Great Britain to Japan, and the grand historical and political events of her life, are familiar to all

* It is said that Elizabeth was united to the father of this child (Razumofsky) by a private marriage.

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readers; or, if not present to the memory, may be found in the first biographical dictionary at hand. It is more to our present purpose to spread out her great empire, as a map, before us, and take a view of her character, court, and government as of a vast picture. We shall thus be enabled to form some general estimate of the good she performed, and the evil she perpetrated. Both were on a gigantic scale, for she worked with gigantic means; and held in her hand a lever, which shook the universe, even from the east to the west.

Catherine had one overmastering passion,—ambition. There are many kinds of ambition: generally speaking, it is a compound of the love of power and the love of praise; but the basis of this woman's character being selfishness, so her ambition began and ended with self. Though it worked in a great sphere, and with large means, and consequently had a delusive appearance of grandeur, it was, in truth, the meanest and narrowest passion that could possess a human mind; it was without a tincture of generous principle or kindly feeling; it was the mere vanity of her sex, which had better have been confined to shining in a drawing-room, or ruling a *coterie*.

According to the well-known adage in the Spectator, "the love of praise produces excellent effects in women of sense." The principle is perhaps the very worst by which a woman, in her feminine character, could be actuated; but Catherine was less a woman than a sovereign: she had sense, and her insatiate love of glory produced consequently some good effects. She began her reign by making several wise and admirable regulations for the internal government of her empire: she confirmed the two principal edicts of her unfortunate predecessor; and appropriated to herself all the credit which belonged to them and to him. The first of these edicts suppressed for ever the Inquisition of State, a horrid engine of despotic tyranny; and the second regulated

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the estates of the clergy. She also instituted a new police, and gave a more simple form to the government. She founded several colleges and hospitals, on a grand scale, both at Petersburg and Moscow; particularly a foundling and a lying-in hospital, both remarkable for the excellent and benevolent manner in which they were conducted. She endowed two magnificent seminaries at Petersburg, the one for the education of five hundred young ladies, the other a military school for the same number of young men. She made various enactments to protect commerce; she encouraged arts and manufactures; and invited English workmen, and ingenious foreigners of every country, to settle in Russia, allowing them many privileges and immunities.* She repaired her seaports, constructed vessels; fortified her towns, increased her army, and applied herself to business with indefatigable activity and perseverance.

All this was well: but while Catherine promulgated one *ukase*† after another, full of wisdom and benevolence, which were widely spread abroad and attracted the attention of statesmen, the admiration of philosophers, and the praise and wonder of Europe, all was not done which she intended and willed to be done. She went too fast; she wanted patience; she wanted goodness; she wanted a reasoning and a calculating head. She undertook all that she resolved; but she seldom completed what she undertook; and though all things appeared possible to a woman inflated with self-will, and of a most vivacious temperament, who had gold and the lives of men at her disposal, and never spared either, we

* "The 100,000 colonists which Catherine had at different times (1764 and 1765) brought into her country, the greater part of whom were Germans, were reduced within ten years, by the wickedness and rapacity of the Russian agents, to less than 29,000, dispersed and languishing about Saratof, Kief, &c."—Life of Catherine, vol. ii. p. 335, 3d edit.

† An imperial ordinance, or proclamation, having the same effect as a law.

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are surprised, after all, to find how little was really done—to perceive on how false and poor a foundation much of her fame has been raised. We are everywhere struck by vast beginnings and mean endings; and by the mixture of real barbarism and vulgarity with the ostentation of humanity and refinement. Before Catherine's edicts or intentions could reach the extremities of her empire, they were sure to be perverted by the way;* and we are continually reminded of the remark of Diderot, who compared the Russian empire, under Catherine, to a fruit rotten before it was ripe; or the yet more clever simile of Joseph II., who called it, a "colossus of brass on a pedestal of clay."

To give a few instances of what is meant,—for it is impossible here to enter at large into the statistics of Russia,—we all know that the principal fame of Catherine rests on her celebrated code of laws, and on her title of *legislatrix* of her dominions. We find this repeated and insisted upon in every work which treats of her or of Russia. Even Frederic of Prussia, who did not love her, said, "If several women as sovereigns have obtained a deserved celebrity,—Semiramis for her conquests, Elizabeth of England for her political sagacity, Maria Theresa for her astonishing firmness of character,—to Catherine alone may be given the title of a female lawgiver."†

But surely on this point her claims to a glory, singular indeed, if deserved, have been strangely rated. It is true that she published some excellent edicts; one, for instance, by which she abolished the use of torture in particular cases, and another, towards the end of her reign, by which that horrid practice was annulled for ever. By attending to her courts of justice, the appointment of new judges, and the increase of their salaries, she endeavoured

* Vie de l'Impératrice Catherine II., vol. ii. p. 263.
† Ségur, vol. ii. p. 176.

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to render, and did render, much service to her people. But with regard to her famous code of laws, about which Voltaire writes in such a rapture of adulation, its true history appears to be this:—Catherine, intending to give a new code to her empire, drew up a set of instructions in her own handwriting, which consisted of a tissue of paragraphs taken principally from Montesquieu's "*Esprit des Loix*," and Beccaria's treatise on crime and punishment, and other well-known writers. To have had recourse to such great authorities could scarcely have been made a subject of ridicule, if she had not laid claim to originality and authorship, and received with such arrogant self-complacency the compliments and flatteries of all Europe. She then assembled deputies from all the provinces of her empire, who met in great state at Moscow, and the instructions of the empress were read aloud; the deputies were then dismissed, and a committee was appointed to digest and arrange this intended code; year after year passed, and at last a kind of preamble was published, but Catherine found it much easier to publish *ukases* than to make laws. She grew tired of her code and her committee, other interests had seized on her versatile mind. As the members of this council of legislators had each a good salary, it became at last a mere job; if some minister or favourite had a poor relation or dependant to provide for, it was only getting him appointed one of this committee, so that not unfrequently it numbered among its members persons who were as ignorant as they were worthless and wicked. The abuse increasing every day, it was at last dissolved, but the fame of the legislatrix and her code survived.* The copy of her instructions, magnificently bound, was enclosed

* Memoirs of the court of Petersburg, vol. ii.—and Ségur adds another cause: "Au bruit de ces discussions, les serfs de quelques seigneurs agités par l'espoir de la liberté, commençaient en plusieurs lieux à faire craindre des insurrections; l'assemblée fut dissoute, et l'impératrice se vit réduite à rédiger seule les lois."

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in a casket enriched with gold and jewels, and deposited in the imperial library at Petersburg, where it was exhibited to strangers as a venerable curiosity, and where it is still to be seen.

Catherine is said to have doubled the resources and revenues of her empire. Undoubtedly she increased its resources, by the extension of her commerce; and by her conquests over the Turks, which threw open the trade and navigation of the Mediterranean, she greatly added to the riches and power of Russia; but she exhausted her resources much faster than she could create them, and she wasted her revenues more quickly than she could replenish them. She doubled and trebled the taxes on her people, and we find whole provinces driven to desperation by the legal pillage of her tyrannical officers. Her court was maintained with oriental pomp and luxury. The fame of her liberality and her munificence resounded through Europe; but were these proper appellations for that guilty prodigality with which she lavished the property of her people?* She used to call her vast empire "mon petit ménage." She said to the Prince de Ligne, "On dit toujours que je vais faire banqueroute; que je fais tant de depenses. Eh bien, mon petit ménage va toujours son train!" It was easy to *say* this; and the "petit ménage," from her imperial lips, must have sounded very airy, and grand, and graceful; but shall we suffer ourselves to be cheated with pretty phrases? To find some parallel for the criminal profusion of Catherine,—a profusion which exceeds all calculation, all belief,—we ought to go back to the days of Heliogabalus, and the Calif Vathek. Where she enriched one worthy family, she reduced by her misgovernment hundreds to starvation and

* Catherine's establishment of favourites cost her, on a moderate computation, eighty-nine millions of rubles (about twelve millions sterling.) One-third more, it is said, ought to be added to this sum, because there are no means of calculating the possessions either of Potemkin, or Zubof.

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beggary; where she gave a few hundred rubles to pension a learned man, or a few thousands to endow a college or an hospital, she showered millions on greedy and worthless favourites; she gave away as gifts, estates equal in extent to provinces: by a word, by a stroke of her pen, she, who called her people her children, and ordered the word *subject* to be substituted for the word *slave*, gave away thousands, tens of thousands of peasants;* poor wretches who in Russia are transferred like cattle from one proprietor to another. She gave diamonds by handfuls, and made gold and silver common as pebbles. Yet when we read over the names and qualifications of those who were the confidants or ministers of Catherine, of those who were particularly distinguished by her munificence, it is like looking over the peerage of Pandemonium;—for where but *there*, and in the court of Russia, could such an assemblage of fiends and savages, ruffians and reptiles, have been congregated together, to bask in a monarch's smile, and fatten on the blood and tears of an oppressed people? The plausible profligate Besborodko was another Belial; Alexey Orloff, a sort of Beelzebub; the insatiate Zuboff, another Mammon; Narishkin, the cunning, caustic buffoon of the court, another Mephistophilus. "Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood," might have found a parallel in a Suvoroff, or a Drevitch, or a Kamensky, of butchering memory; and Potemkin, with his foot on the necks of them all, might have sat for the lost archangel himself. Catherine, surrounded by this court of demons and cormorants, was compared by her flatterers to Juno in the midst of the gods; but methinks that, without going out of Pandemonium, we might have found a prototype for her too.†

To return to Catherine and her finances: it is

* To the Orloffs alone, she gave 45,000 peasants.

† See Milton—

"The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair," &c.

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evident that she had no system, but that of taking with one hand, and giving with the other. She had not an *arithmetical* head; and she was too self-willed and impatient to pursue a regular and permanent method. When she had drained her internal resources, the pillage of the Crimea, of Poland, and of Courland, which were in a manner confiscated during her reign, supplied her profusion; but she left her treasury empty, and her revenues in the most horrible state of confusion and dilapidation. Her conduct, with regard to her coinage, ought to be contrasted with that of Maria Theresa. In the time of Catherine, the gold and silver coin of Russia was so shamefully debased, as to have become a by-word; and the want of money frequently drove her to other expedients, most disgraceful to herself and mischievous to her people.*

To this it may be added, that the government monopolized the sale of spirituous liquors, and consequently drunkenness, the principal vice of the Russians, was encouraged rather than repressed, as being a fruitful source of revenue. Nor does it give us a high idea of Catherine's internal regulations, when we turn from her brilliant court and capital to behold plague and famine raging in her provinces; when we read of continual seditions and rebellions, of which there were six or seven in the first ten years of her reign. The rebellion of Pugatcheff cost the lives of one hundred thousand men before it was suppressed.†

Under the year 1771 we find recorded one of the most striking and awful events that could be found in the annals of a great monarchy. All the inhabitants of one large province lying to the north of Astracan, rendered desperate by the cruelty and op-

* *Vide* Essai sur la Commerce de la Russie.

† It was to perpetuate the memory of this rebellion that Catherine, in a grand fit of imperial indignation, changed the name of one of the principal rivers of Russia; and commanded that it should no longer be called the Yaik, but the Ural.

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pression of the governor placed over them, emigrated *en masse*, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand people, and, marching eastward, sought the protection of the Emperor of China, who gave them lands, and settled them in his dominions. Catherine sent an embassy to require that her fugitive subjects should be sent back to her; but Kien-long replied in a high strain, commenting on the tyranny of the Russian empress, and refusing to deliver up those who, like children, had sought his paternal protection. Catherine, unaccustomed to missives in this tone, was enraged, and she ever afterward indulged a truly feminine spite against the Emperor of China. In her correspondence with Voltaire, she affected to turn the whole matter into ridicule; but she did not speedily recover from this mortification; and the territory abandoned by these poor people still remains comparatively a desert.

Catherine, during her lifetime, published a list of two hundred and forty-five cities which she had founded in her dominions. This sounds grand; but after the lapse of fifty years, we may look round us as vainly for *her* cities as for those of the Babylonian Semiramis. Cherson, which some years ago might have been deemed an exception to this remark, is now sinking into decay, and its commerce annihilated.* In some instances, she merely indicated the spot where she intended or willed that a city should be erected; in others, she merely, by her imperial *ukase*, gave the name of city to some hamlet or village, or enlarged or rebuilt part of a dilapidated town. It was in allusion to this well-known vanity that Joseph II. once made a speech not less true than pointed. When he met her on her famous voyage down the Dneiper in 1787, he accompanied her to lay the foundations of a new city to be called, after her name, Ekaterinaslof, and which, in her imagina-

* Vide Heber's Journal, published in his Life; and Clarke's Travels.

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tion, already rivalled Petersburg. The empress laid the first stone in great pomp, and the emperor laid the second. On his return from this ceremony, Joseph remarked, in his dry, epigrammatic manner, "The empress and I have this day achieved a great work; she has laid the first stone of a great city, and I have laid the *last*." His speech was prophetic; the city never proceeded farther, nor does it appear that it was ever thought of more, though we find it inserted in most of the maps of Russia.

Catherine's philosophical toleration of all religions, and her magnanimity in granting an asylum to the Jesuits, when they were banished from the other states of Europe, have been much admired; and we have all heard of her famous "dinner of toleration," when the clergy of every persuasion dined together by her order.* But it must be observed, that Catherine herself had not the slightest tincture of religious feeling in her composition. The Lutheran faith, in which she had been brought up, she changed with unhesitating facility for the Greek church; and, to have gained Turkey, she would have turned Mohammedan. Her toleration was indifference; and though she occasionally put on an air of sanctity to please the populace, we find, from her letters to Voltaire, and elsewhere, that she was in reality an *esprit fort*, and a disciple of the French school of skepticism. It is worth remarking, that while Maria Theresa's pilgrimages and prayers have been ridiculed, no one has ridiculed Catherine's pilgrimage to the Virgin at Moscow;† because every one knew that with her it was mere policy. But which was, in point of fact, the most ridiculous: the heartfelt, though mistaken, piety of the one, or the despicable and impudent farce played off by the other?

The patronage which Catherine extended to art,

* This annual dinner was discontinued when it had been sufficiently talked of.

† Life of Catherine II., vol. ii. p. 313.

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science, and literature was munificent and sensible, but it has been greatly overrated; and the dazzling reputation which during her life she courted by every means, and purchased at any price, shrinks and grows dim before the test of truth.

For instance, all Europe at one time rang with her academy of sciences. It was planned by Peter the First, carried into execution by his widow, endowed by Elizabeth, and enlarged and enriched by Catherine. The traveller Coxe, who visited Petersburg towards the end of her reign, remarks, that Catherine's literary institutions had hitherto produced very little effect. Can we wonder at this, when we find that she had appointed the Princess Dashkoff *president* of the academy of sciences?

This celebrated woman, who played such a conspicuous part in the revolution of 1762, was equally notorious for her violent and masculine temper, her extreme avarice, and her odious profligacy. On Catherine's accession, she demanded, as a reward for her services, to be made colonel of the imperial guards. She was exceedingly indignant that her request was refused, and might certainly have pleaded that she was as fit to command a regiment of troops as Catherine was to command thirty millions of slaves. A coolness took place between the empress and her friend, and the princess retired to Moscow. After a while, Catherine, finding herself beset by conspiracies, and either feeling some suspicion of her former confidant, or some want of her energetic counsels, wrote her a long letter of several pages, full of flattery and eloquence, appealing to her friendship, and conjuring her to disclose what she knew of the conspiracies against her. The Princess Dashkoff replied in four lines: "Madam, I have heard nothing. If I had heard any thing, I should take good care how I spoke of it. What is it you require of me?—that I should expire on a scaffold? I am ready to mount it."

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Catherine was disconcerted, but not intimidated, by this display of spirit. She was jealous of the talents of the princess, but she felt her own strength; she left her friend to spend a few years in a species of disgrace, and in travelling about Europe, everywhere fixing attention by her extraordinary manners and her singular audacity.* At length, her wrath having subsided, and Catherine finding it convenient to conciliate one so deep in her terrible secrets, the princess returned to court,† received many rich presents, and was appointed president of the academy, which she contrived, during her rule, to render as ridiculous as useless. From motives of avarice, she would not allow the stoves to be lighted in winter, that she might pocket the price of the fuel; and we have a very graphic description of this virago presiding in her academy, wrapped up in her rich furs, in the midst of a few starved and shivering doctors (for all who dared to absent themselves did so), commanding the professors as if they had been troopers, and treating the sciences as if they had been her slaves. Catherine herself had no real love for any of those arts which soften, purify, or elevate the mind; but she patronised them as subservient to her state, her glory, and her power.‡ Thus, she not

* At Paris, some years after this time, she was one day seated in the garden of the Tuileries, when some person, on recognising her, said loud enough to be heard, "Do you see that woman? That is she who helped Catherine the Second to strangle her husband!" In a few minutes she was surrounded by a crowd of persons, who pressed upon her with the most insulting curiosity. The princess, too haughty and self-possessed to flinch, endured this for some time; but at length, observing an elderly officer who kept his eyes fixed upon her with a look peculiarly significant and scrutinizing, she addressed him with concentrated impatience. "Monsieur, qu'avez vous donc tant à me considerer?" To which he replied, gravely, "Madame, je vous demande bien pardon; mais je vous regarde, et ne vous *considère* pas." At these words the princess rose in a fury, made her way through the crowd, ordered post-horses, and left Paris the next morning.

† In 1773. Vide Life of Catherine.

‡ "Je convenais avec elle, qu'elle n'avait pas de connaissance en peinture ni en musique; je lui prouvais même un jour plus qu'elle ne voulait que son goût en bâtiments était mediocre."—Vide Mémoires et Lettres du Prince de Ligne.

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only had no taste for music, but she was destitute of ear to distinguish one tune from another, as she often frankly acknowledged; but nothing less would serve her than an Italian *corps d'opera* attached to her domestic establishment, a Cimarosa or a Sarti to direct her concerts, and the Gabrielli, or Mara, or Gasparini to sing for her. She had no taste for painting, yet she purchased at a high price some beautiful collections, particularly the Houghton collection from England, and that of Crozat from Paris. In the gallery of her palace of the Hermitage hung some magnificent specimens of the Italian and Flemish schools, purchased in France and Italy;* yet she was singularly impassive to all the pleasure they could bestow. In the room in which she habitually dined hung two pictures which Casanova had painted by her order, in honour of Potemkin and Suvarroff. One represented the siege of Otchakoff; the other, the assault of Ismail. In both the carnage and the physical horrors of those scenes were represented with such hideous truth, that few, except Catherine herself, could look on them without shuddering; to her they were merely trophies of her conquests, and grateful memorials of her power. Dr. Clarke, in his Travels, remarks the tawdry taste of her splendid palaces, which, in their interior decorations, absolutely realized the tales of oriental fable. We read of gardens and pleasure-grounds enclosed with glass, where, in the depth of an arctic winter, reigned the verdure and the temperature of summer, and "all the bloom and ravishment of spring." We read of chambers roofed and walled with amber, or floored with mosaic composed of the most rare and precious woods, at the price of one hundred rubles the square inch. At Czarskosélo Dr. Clarke saw a room of which the walls, instead of being hung with silk or paper, "were entirely covered with fine pictures by

* Coxe's Travels in Russia, vol. ii. p. 143. 5th edit.

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the best Flemish and other masters. They were fitted together without frames, so as to cover on each side the whole of the walls, without the smallest attention to disposition or general effect. But, to consummate the *Vandalism* of those who directed the work, when they found a place they could not conveniently fill, the pictures were cut, in order to adapt them to the accidental spaces thus left. The soldiers of Mummius, at the sacking of Corinth, would have been puzzled to contrive more ingenious destruction of the fine arts."*

Catherine, in one respect, showed herself much superior to Frederic the Great. Frederic, while he encouraged French authors and French literature, openly contemned the language and literature of his own country; and while such men as Kant, Gellert, Lessing, Klopstock, Gleim were struggling into fame, he contented himself with flattering and pensioning Voltaire, and others of his set. Catherine acted with better sense and taste. Besides being well studied in all the arts of popularity, she had really a larger mind and a more liberal spirit than Frederic. She too was fond of French literature; wrote and spoke the language with purity and elegance; nor was she sparing of gifts and flattery to those writers whose praise she wished to win or purchase. But she also cultivated and encouraged the language and literature of her adopted country, and composed in the Russ language with great facility and elegance.† The best Russian authors of her time were, Lomonozof, the first lyric poet of Russia; Sumorokof, their best dramatic author; Kheraskof, a writer of tragedies and romances, and the author of the first

* Clarke's Travels, part 1, p. 19.

† She instituted a fund for translating foreign and classical works into the Russian language; and a list of these translations, completed before the year 1790, may be found in Coxe's Travels. I do not think that entire credit can be given to this list, for it includes some works which were not translated till lately.—Vide Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 2.

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Russian epic poem;* Prince Sherebetoff, their best historian; and the celebrated naturalist, Professor Pallas. All these received from Catherine pensions and honours, or gifts in jewels and money. Her patronage of the native poets and writers of Russia was the more remarkable, and not less praiseworthy, because it was from a principle of royal munificence, and not from any genuine taste. Catherine, defective in ear, in sensibility, in imagination, had herself no idea of poetry, or even of the harmony of verse.† She was once, indeed, seized with a fancy for making French verses, and thought she had but to *will* it to accomplish it. Ségur spent ten days in trying to teach her the rules of rhyme and composition; but it was time lost. The utmost effort of her genius was to produce a foolish couplet on the death of a lapdog which had bit her physician, Dr. Rogerson. This specimen of imperial verse-making ran thus:—

"Ci-gît la Duchesse Anderson,
Qui mordit Monsieur Rogerson."

Catherine was rather piqued at her ill success, but her courtiers consoled her; and Ségur gallantly informed his mighty pupil that she must absolutely resign herself to the necessity of making laws and conquests—*in prose.*

Catherine has, notwithstanding, some claims to authorship. She composed, with the assistance of her secretary Derjawin, several little dramatic pieces. One of these, in the Russ language, was very remarkable, as being, perhaps, the first instance of a species of dramatic entertainment which has since become popular both in France and England. It was entitled *The History of Oleg*,‡ and was properly

* An interesting account of some other poets of Catherine's time may be found in Bowring's "Russian Anthology."

† "Son cerveau, tout rempli de raison et de politique, ne trouvait point d'images pour enrichir ses pensées."—"Je crois qu'il était difficile de rencontrer une oreille moins sensible à l'harmonie des vers."—Ségur, Mémoires, vol. iii. p. 72.

‡ Oleg, one of the earliest heroes of the Russian history, lived about

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neither tragedy, comedy, nor melodrama; but a series of acts or scenes representing the principal events in the life of Oleg. For instance, in the first act Oleg founds the city of Moscow; in the second, he places on the throne his ward Igor, and marries him to a beautiful princess; in the third act, he is master of Constantinople, where he obliges Leo, the Emperor of the East, to make a peace; in the last act, Oleg is gratified with a series of festivals given in his honour at Constantinople; and, in conclusion, he takes his leave of the Greek emperor, after suspending his buckler to a column in the hippodrome of Constantinople, as a trophy of his expedition, and an encouragement to his successors to return thither at some future period. It is difficult to imagine where Catherine found the model of this production; perhaps in the early dramas of Russia. It was represented on the theatre of Petersburg in 1794, with unexampled splendour; some of the scenes and decorations were upon a scale of magnificence of which we can form no idea, and the number of the *dramatis personæ* amounted to seven hundred.

To these few particulars it may be added, that Catherine, by the single act of allowing every individual who chose it to set up a printing-office without a license from government, did more to advance the civilization of Russia than by all her other edicts; and her severity towards the latter part of her reign, when enraged and terrified by the progress of the French revolution, could not entirely undo the good she had formerly done.*

The statue of bronze erected to Peter the Great (whom she used to call her grandfather), was one of her magnificent works. She *intended* to rebuild the Kremlin, and had also designed a road to connect

861, nearly contemporary with Charlemagne and Alfred. He was Regent of Russia during the minority of the Grand-duke Igor (or George).

* During the last seven or eight years of Catherine's reign, Russian literature certainly declined in taste and spirit; but it has since revived.

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the two great capitals, Petersburg and Moscow; but neither of these designs was completed.

One more plume must be torn from Catherine's crest before we have done with her personal influence and domestic government. It has been accounted a virtue in her—a trait of magnanimity—that she suffered her son to exist! Perhaps, since she detested him, since she was possessed of the throne, which was his by law, by right, and by inheritance, and knew him to be the idol of the populace, and an excuse or a motive for continual disturbances and conspiracies, we may give some credit to the mother who refrained from murdering her offspring. Catherine's letter to D'Alembert, inviting him to Russia to become the preceptor of the grand-duke,—a letter full of maternal tenderness, wisdom, and philosophy,—was circulated through all the gazettes of Europe, translated into half a dozen languages, praised, cited, wondered at. But in what did this vain flourish end? In giving to the Grand-duke Paul the very worst education possible; in keeping him at a distance from her person and from the throne, surrounded by spies and by mean and depraved persons, and often in want of every thing befitting his rank as her son and successor. Thirty-four years of contempt, coldness, and restraint so crushed the heart and spirit of this unfortunate prince, that from a good-natured and intelligent being, he was at length perverted into a stupid, irritable, vengeful maniac; morally speaking, Catherine murdered her son as she had murdered his father. When in 1780 she gave him and his consort her imperial permission to travel through Europe, he was confided to the care of one of her sworn creatures (Soltikoff), and a courier was sent off every day to Petersburg with a minute account of all that passed.* The Chamberlain Bibikof, having ventured to write

* Vide Life of Catherine, vol. iii.

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to the grand-duke an account of what was passing at Petersburg during his absence, was detected, and sent off to Siberia for the remainder of his life. The grand-duke visited Paris, where the people were more struck with his excessive ugliness than his magnificence. Being one day at the Tuilleries, Louis XVI. asked him, in the course of conversation, whether he had any person in his suite who was particularly attached to him? Paul replied, "If my mother thought that I had but a dog belonging to me that loved me, to-morrow it would be flung into the Seine with a stone round its neck." These words, pronounced with a kind of fearful coolness, had such an effect, that the courtiers who were present, even the king himself, seemed to shrink back with horror, and for a moment there was a dead silence.*

Catherine crowned all her moral and political delinquencies by bequeathing to her empire this mad, wretched, and perverted being,† who in the course of four short years overturned all that she had done of good, and exceeded all that she had committed of evil.

A short sketch of Catherine's foreign policy will serve to complete this colossal picture of guilt and splendour.

From the commencement of her reign, she appears to have revolved the most stupendous projects that ever entered into the head of an ambitious sovereign. She meditated the foundation of two mighty empires, to be inherited by her grandsons; hence she bestowed on them the names of Alexander and Constantine: and in the pictures and engravings of them, published under her auspices, the one was represented as dividing the Gordian knot, the other as bearing the standard of the Greek empire, the cross of Constantine. In pursuance of the mighty plans

* Vide Vie de Marie Antoinette.

† She did not bequeath the empire to *him*, but, had she lived, would probably have altered the succession.

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she had formed, Catherine steadily kept in view two principal objects; first, to extend her dominions on the west by seizing on Poland; and secondly, to drive the Turks from Constantinople.

She began with Poland; under colour of friendship she sent an army into that country, and forced upon the Poles a king of her own choice, whom she knew to be weak, and believed to be devoted to her interests.* She dictated laws to them at the point of the bayonet; controlled the Diet; purchased the venal with bribes; intimidated the weak by threats, and massacred or sent into exile all who resisted.

It has been already related that the treaty for the dismemberment of Poland was first proposed by Prince Henry of Prussia, in 1769. "If Maria Theresa," says the author of the Life of Catherine, "had been still sole possessor of the German empire, they would not, perhaps, have succeeded in making her a sharer in so unjust a spoliation. Her son, Joseph II., was not so difficult. Turkey, France, England, might also have maintained the treaties of which they were the guarantees; but these powers were so easily deceived, or so indifferent to the fate of other nations, that Catherine said to Prince Henry, 'I will frighten Turkey, and I will flatter England; do you take upon you to gain over Austria, that she may amuse France.'"

The dastardly policy of these courts is the best excuse that can be made for the imperial insolence of Catherine.

The Polanders, however, did not tamely submit to this usurpation of their country, nor were they inclined to suffer a foreign army to dictate laws to them in their capital. They rose against the Russians, and had they not been divided by fierce factions among their own nobility, would probably have succeeded in driving out the Russians. From 1765,

* Stanislas Poniatowski, her former lover.

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when Catherine first invaded the country, till its final seizure in 1795, Poland presented a scene of horror, calamity, and crime that can hardly bear description; mutual animosity was increased by mutual treachery and cruelty. The generals to whom the empress delegated her power acted like barbarians, as in fact they were; and the enormities committed by Soltikof, Drevitch, and Repuin have devoted their names, next to that of their imperial mistress, to universal detestation. The Poles besought the interference and aid of the Turks, who beheld with jealousy the ambition of the empress, and this was the occasion of the first Turkish war, declared in 1768. Catherine conferred the principal command on Marshal Romantzoff, the greatest of all her generals,* and he took the field with an army of 150,000 men. The Turks opposed their enemies with great bravery and obstinacy, and gained considerable advantages against Prince Galitzen, but they were unable to resist the superior skill and discipline of the Russians. Romantzoff defeated them in two great battles, fought on the banks of the Pruth, and the provinces of Walachia, Moldavia, and Bessarabia submitted to the arms of Catherine. She had conceived the bold idea of dismembering the Greek islands and the Morea from the Ottoman empire, and had induced the Greeks to rise against their Turkish masters, by the most lavish promises of aid and protection. In 1770 she sent a squadron into the Archipelago, and on the 6th of July, in the same year, was fought the memorable battle of Tchesmè, between the Russian and the Turkish fleets. The latter, commanded by the famous Capitan Pacha Hassan, was completely destroyed, and the Russians remained masters of the Grecian seas. The empress chose to ascribe this triumph to Alexey

* Romantzoff, the only really great man in Catherine's service, passed the last years of his life in disgrace, and in a species of exile, because Potemkin hated him, and was jealous of his abilities

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Orloff, and in consequence he was loaded with honours; but it is generally admitted that he had no claim to it whatever, and that the victory was owing to three English officers in the service of Catherine, Admirals Elphinstone, Greig, and Dugdale. In 1774 the Turks were obliged to sue for peace: among other humiliating conditions, Catherine demanded that the Ottoman Porte should recognise the independence of the Crimea, and yield to her vessels the free navigation of the Black Sea, and the Archipelago, which opened an immense source of commerce and riches to the Russian empire. No mention was made of the Greeks, who were left to their fate. The grand seignior resolved to punish their rebellion by a war of extermination: many thousands were massacred, and this devoted people were saved at last, not by the interference of their protectress Catherine, who first excited them to revolt and then abandoned them, but by the intercession of the brave Hassan, who gained for them an act of amnesty.

Thus ended the first Turkish war, in which the empress gained great glory and many advantages for her people; but it was a war undertaken on unjust grounds; it cost the lives of about 200,000 men, and left her finances in a very exhausted state, which many new and oppressive taxes could scarce replenish.

The year 1774 is also remarkable for the disgrace of Gregory Orloff, and the elevation of Potemkin, afterward so famous as Prince Potemkin, who for more than twenty years maintained the post of favourite and chief minister to Catherine.

At the period of her accession, Potemkin, who was then about eighteen, and only a lieutenant in the guards, had attracted the notice of Catherine by his gallantry and his fine person. Within twelve years afterward, he was raised to the highest honours of the empire. He was neither a great statesman nor

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a great general, but he was certainly a most extraordinary man. He had all the petulance, audacity, and wilfulness of a great spoiled boy, yet possessed a genius fitted to conceive and execute the greatest designs. His character displayed a singular union of barbarism and grandeur, and of the most inconsistent, and apparently incompatible qualities. He was at once the most indolent and the most active man in the world; the most luxurious, and the most indefatigable; no dangers appalled and no difficulties repulsed him; yet the slightest caprice, a mere fit of temper, would cause him to abandon projects of vital importance. At one time he talked of making himself King of Poland;—at another, of turning monk or bishop. "He began every thing; completed nothing: disordered the finances; disorganized the army; depopulated the country." He lived with the magnificence of a sovereign prince, and was supposed to be the richest and most powerful individual in Europe; general officers attended on him as his valets-de-chambre, and he not unfrequently boxed their ears with impunity; one moment he would make an aid-de-camp ride two or three hundred miles to bring him a melon or a pineapple, another time he would be found devouring a raw carrot or cucumber in his own antechamber. He had scarcely ever opened a book, yet he learned every thing and forgot nothing; his wonderful quickness in appropriating the knowledge of others served him instead of study. Altogether, his great qualities and his defects precisely fitted him to obtain the ascendency over such a mind as that of Catherine; she grew tired of others, but his caprices, his magnificent spirit, and his gigantic plans, continually interested and occupied her. It is true, as the author of her Life observes, that under Potemkin's administration all things did not go on well, but all *went on*, —"le petit ménage allait son train,"—and the empress desired no more.

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Potemkin was the means of connecting Catherine politically with Joseph the Second, emperor of Germany; a conference between them took place at Mohilef, and Joseph afterward visited the empress at Petersburg; there they concerted measures against the Ottomans, and there unhappy Poland was devoted to ultimate destruction.

It had long been one of Catherine's favourite projects to seize on the Crimea, and annex it to Russia, and she thus achieved her purpose, after keeping it steadily in view for several years. Civil wars and commotions were fomented by her emissaries, until that beautiful peninsula was almost desolated: then she made the disturbances she had herself occasioned the excuse for seizing on the country as the best means of restoring tranquillity: by a manifesto, published in 1783, the Crimea and the Kuban, under the classical names of Taurida and the Caucasus, were annexed to her own dominions, and have ever since remained a part of the Russian empire.

About the same time died the two chiefs of that conspiracy which had placed Catherine on her throne —Count Panin and Prince Gregory Orloff. Panin, who could not endure to see his counsels slighted for those of Potemkin, died of chagrin and disappointment. The close of Orloff's career was much more terrible: though raised from obscurity to princely honours and almost boundless wealth, he was never satisfied; he beheld with jealousy every new court favourite, and the rise of Potemkin threw him into despair. The loss of a young wife, whom he loved with all the passionate fervour of his character, completed his distraction. He was seized with fits of insanity, in which he imagined himself haunted by the spectre of the Czar Peter. His ravings and furious reproaches filled Catherine with horror, and the whole court with consternation; he

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was sent off to Moscow, under proper restraint, and died in a paroxysm of madness.

In the beginning of the year 1787, Potemkin persuaded Catherine to go and admire herself in her new dominions, and be crowned Queen of Taurida. This famous journey, of which we have a particular account, exceeded in magnificence, ostentation, and extravagance any thing recorded in history since the days of the ancient Persian monarchs. It has been compared to the voyage of Cleopatra down the Cydnus, with this distinction, that its purpose was not to enchain a conqueror, but to rivet the chains of the conquered; the whole journey might form, in its theatrical pomp and grandeur, a very apt illustration of Catherine's reign and government.

She set off from Petersburg on the 18th of January, 1787, attended by her favourite aid-de-camp, Momonoff; the great officers of her household; the French, English, and Austrian ministers,* and a numerous suite. The imperial *cortège* consisted of fourteen carriages upon sledges, for the empress and her court; followed by one hundred and sixty others for the attendants and baggage. Five hundred and sixty relays of horses waited them at every post; and like a fleet of light vessels over an icy sea, these luxurious carriages glided, or rather flew over the frozen plains, at the rate of a hundred miles a day.† It was winter—a Russian winter of snows and twilight. On each side of the road immense piles of trees were set on fire, and created an artificial day. Wherever the empress stopped to repose, a temporary palace was erected for her reception, consisting of numerous apartments, corresponding as much as possible with the interior arrangement of her palace at Petersburg; fitted up with every luxury, and closed from all intrusion of the elements.

* The Comté de Ségur; Baron de Cobentzel; and Fitzherbert, since Lord St. Helen's.

† Between nine in the morning and seven in the evening.

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Here, surrounded by her gay flatterers, the empress gave an occasional ball, or received a deputation, or feasted her court; while the peasants assembled on the outside started upon the magic creation which had risen amid their deserts, with open mouths, and hair and beards standing on end with the frost.

When they arrived at Khief, the empress embarked on the Dnieper, and with a fleet of fifty galleys sailed down the river to Cherson: all that the ardent imagination of Potemkin could conceive, all that his unlimited power could execute, was assembled to enchant the senses and flatter the inordinate self-love of his sovereign, and render this voyage celebrated to the latest posterity. Thither were convoyed, from every part of the empire, money, provisions, and troops; the Borysthenes was covered with magnificent galleys; a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers were newly equipped; clouds of Cossacks were seen careering over the plains; the Tartars were clothed and disciplined; deserts were peopled for the occasion, and palaces raised for the reception of the monarch in the midst of trackless wilds; the desolation of the country was disguised by villages built on purpose, and people dressed up to represent peasants were seen dancing to the sound of music, in districts which war and rapacity had laid waste, and where the miserable inhabitants were in reality starving. The King of Poland came to do homage to her who had given him his crown, and who afterward tore it from his brow. The emperor Joseph himself attended on the triumphal progress of the empress Catherine, and was content to mingle among the herd of her courtiers, and to swell the splendour of her state.

Catherine herself neglected nothing to gain popularity and produce an effect.* She bestowed diamonds, ribands, honours, and presents, with all her usual

* "Notre Cléopatre," says the Prince de Ligne, in a tone half raillery, half compliment, "n'avale pas des perles—mais elle en donne beaucoup."

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grace and liberality. In her travelling-carriage she had a large green sack, full of gold coins, and her courtiers were employed in flinging handfuls out of the window to the people, who lay grovelling on the earth as her carriage passed by.*

In the Crimea, she received the homage of the Tartar chiefs, and distributed favours and presents with a lavish hand. She also endeavoured to please the people, who are Mohammedans, by founding two mosques. Six weeks after her departure they were in open revolt, and the half of them massacred before tranquillity could be restored.

On her way back, the empress was conducted by Pultowa. Here two armies suddenly appeared; they met, they engaged, and gave Catherine an exact representation in mimic fight of that famous battle in which Charles the Twelfth of Sweden was defeated by Peter the Great.

The empress returned to Petersburg after an absence of six months, and the result of this magnificent journey was another Turkish war, which commenced the same year (1787).

This war was encouraged by Prince Potemkin from a private motive; though loaded with titles and honours, he had not yet received the order of St. George, because, to wear the decoration of this military order, it was necessary to have commanded an army and gained a victory. Thus, to gratify the puerile fancy of the favourite for an additional star and riband, a war was commenced, which cost the lives of some millions of men

But in the mean time Catherine was threatened with danger from an unexpected quarter. Gustavus III., of Sweden suddenly declared war against her; and while the principal part of the Russian army was engaged in the south, he attacked her on the north; and even threatened her in her capital. But Cathe-

* *Vide* Mémoires et Lettres du Prince de Ligne, vol. 1. p. 138.

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tine was not dismayed: she possessed in the highest degree the virtues of courage, firmness, and promptitude in action; in a few weeks she sent an army into Finland, and a fleet into the Baltic. The Swedes were at first rather successful; but Gustavus was unpopular in his own kingdom, and disliked by his troops; in the end he was defeated in several engagements by sea and land; and a treaty, which left things precisely as they were before, put an end to hostilities.

The Turkish war proceeded. Potemkin, to whom nothing was denied, took the field in 1788 with 150,000 men. Romantzoff, Repnin, and Suvaroff, all celebrated generals, served with him, or under him. The great fortress of Otchakoff, on the Black Sea, was first taken, and the inhabitants given up to general slaughter; 25,000 Turks were massacred, and the Russians lost 12,000 men in the assault. The empress distributed the most magnificent rewards on this occasion, in estates, money, diamonds, and orders of knighthood, and excited her generals and troops to fresh exertions. The rest of the war was a series of victories; almost every town that was taken was reduced to ashes, and the people massacred. The ferocious Suvarroff and the yet more barbarous Kamensky spread desolation everywhere, plundering and slaughtering without control and without mercy; while Catherine was amusing herself in her capital, giving balls, distributing diamonds, and singing Te Deums in honour of their victories.

But one of the most tremendous events of this war was the siege and capture of Ismail, in 1790. Potemkin had spent seven months before this place; and the inhabitants still held out. At last, grown impatient, he sent orders to Suvarroff to take the city within three days. Suvarroff immediately ordered the assault, in which 15,000 Russians fell; but the place was taken, plundered, burnt, and 25,000 men,

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women, and children massacred. After the carnage of this horrible day, Suvaroff wrote to Catherine, "Glory to God, and to the empress! Ismail is taken."

Potemkin returned to Petersburg in 1791; and Catherine received him with transports of joy, made him a present of a magnificent palace, and a coat laced with diamonds, which cost 50,000*l.*; but even at this time, and at the height of his prosperity and grandeur, Potemkin was perhaps one of the most miserable of men. He had accomplished all he desired: there was nothing left for him to wish for: he was satiated with honours and pleasures, worn out with dissipation, sick of himself, his greatness, and his victories. Bloated and pampered by every vice, he became restless, moody, melancholy, and would often sigh, and even shed tears, like a peevish child. In this state of mind, he again left Petersburg, in order to meet the Turkish emissaries. Some overtures had been made for a cessation of hostilities, and Catherine, whose empire had been almost ruined by her successes, accepted the mediation of the British court, and consented to a peace which was afterward concluded at Yassy, in 1791.

This war cost the lives of 130,000 Austrians, 200,000 Russians, and 330,000 Turks; the destruction of many cities, the miseries of famine and pestilence in those provinces which were the seat of war, and the waste of millions of treasure; in other respects, the countries engaged in it remained nearly in the same state as before. Prince Potemkin, who had originally caused the war, had not the glory or the satisfaction of concluding a peace; while travelling between Yassy and Nicholaef he was seized with indisposition, and being taken out of his carriage and laid on the grass by the wayside, he died there in the arms of his niece, the Countess Branicka; he was buried at Cherson,* and the empress planned

* On the accession of the emperor Paul, orders were received at Cherson to take up the body of Potemkin, and cast it into the first hole

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a magnificent monument to his memory, which was never even commenced.

Catherine the Great* did not long survive her favourite, but she had time to add one more to the list of her great political sins, by the final partition of Poland. She made a treaty with Frederic William, King of Prussia, by which they divided between them all that remained of that wretched country. The King of Poland, a feeble and worthless man, was sent into captivity, and most of the Polish nobility, bought by the gold or intimidated by the threats of Catherine, assisted in enslaving and betraying their country. Others, more generous, rose in defence of their liberties; the gallant Kosciusko raised a little army of devoted men, and the Russians, notwithstanding their superiority of numbers, were several times defeated; but Catherine and the King of Prussia had immense resources at their command, and Poland was soon overrun by their vast armies. Kosciusko was overpowered by numbers, his friends cut to pieces, and himself, covered with wounds, was taken prisoner, and afterward sent to Siberia. The few Poles who still held out retired to Warsaw, and shut themselves up in Prague, a small suburb of that city. Suvarroff, coming up, ordered a general massacre, not only of the soldiers who had resisted, but of all the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex—even women and helpless children found no mercy. Thirty thousand people fell victims to his fury, and after this terrible day no further resistance was made. Catherine and

that might be found. These orders were implicitly obeyed. A hole was dug in the fosse, into which he was thrown with as little ceremony as a dead dog, and afterward no one dared to mention the name of Potemkin.

The reader need hardly be reminded, that not far from this place rests the body of Howard the good; "As if," says Dr. Clarke, "the hand of destiny had directed two persons, in whom were exemplified the extremes of virtue and vice, to one common spot, in order that the contrast might remain a lesson for mankind."—Travels, vol. i. p. 603.

* The Prince de Ligne used to call her Catherine *le Grand*; an untranslatable compliment, if it *be* a compliment.

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Frederic divided the rest of Poland between them, and all Europe looked on passively, while this great act of injustice and robbery was openly committed.

Catherine next seized upon the duchy of Courland, and those of the nobles who resisted this appropriation were proscribed and exiled to Siberia; their possessions were confiscated, and bestowed by Catherine on her courtiers and favourites. Yet all this was not enough! Though around her none moved or breathed but by her sovereign will—though the Turks, humbled into suppliants, crouched beneath her sceptre—though unhappy Poland lay at her feet bleeding and palpitating like a victim newly slain,—still, while there existed upon earth a power that could brave or equal her own, her all-devouring ambition cried out for new sacrifices;—insatiate as the Giaour in Calif Vathek, she still exclaimed, "More! more!" She had commenced hostilities with Persia, preparatory to her great and favourite scheme of erecting the Greek provinces into an empire for the Grand-duke Constantine. She was immersed in a series of dark and treacherous plots to gain the ascendency over the government of Sweden. She meditated vengeance against Prussia. She had resolved a war of extermination against the French republic, which she regarded with a mixture of terror and detestation.

> "Ah! wherefore does the northern conqueress stay?
> Groans not her chariot on its onward way?"*

No! in mercy to mankind, the hand of Heaven interposed, to arrest her mad and guilty career. When Cæsar was asked what death he esteemed the happiest? he replied, "The most sudden." It is on this principle, I presume, that the death of Catherine has been pronounced *happy*, because it was instantaneous; but there is something in the idea of

* Coleridge.

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this terrible and depraved old woman, hurried out of the world with all her sins upon her head, without a moment granted to think, to prepare, to repent, which fills the mind with dread and horror. The circumstances which were the remote, if not the immediate, cause of her death were extremely characteristic. Catherine had long resolved that one of her granddaughters should be Queen of Sweden. Although the young king Gustavus Adolphus was already affianced to a princess of Mecklenburgh, she contrived to have this marriage broken off; and at length prevailed on the Regent-duke of Sudermania to bring his ward to Petersburg; once there, she reckoned on her own consummate address, and the charms of the intended bride, to accomplish the rest.

The Grand-duchess Alexandrina was selected to be the future Queen of Sweden. She was just fifteen, but with a mind and person which had outgrown her years; she was tall and well formed, with noble and regular features, a profusion of beautiful hair, and eyes that beamed with intelligence and sensibility. Her governess Mademoiselle Wilanof had educated her in retirement, and with the most devoted care and affection; and in person, manners, and mind Alexandrina was at this time one of the most lovely and accomplished princesses in Europe.

The young King of Sweden was about eighteen; he was well-looking and well-bred, with a fine martial presence, and frank, captivating manners. By the arts of their attendants, the imaginations of both were inflamed; they were allowed to suspect that they were intended for each other: they soon became mutually and strongly attached; and Catherine hoped to make the feelings of these youthful and innocent beings subservient to her ambitious and crooked policy.

Proposals of marriage were speedily made; the

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treaty drawn up; the day of betrothment fixed, and a splendid fête prepared for the occasion. The morning arrived, and Catherine had assembled all her family and court in her presence-chamber; Alexandrina, adorned in bridal pomp, stood at her side: all was in readiness; but still the royal bridegroom appeared not;—they waited—there was a chill and ominous silence—the bride turned pale—the sovereign turned *red*; and the courtiers looked upon each other.

The articles of marriage had been carried to the young king for his signature. Perhaps Catherine supposed that, enamoured as he was, and in the hurry of the moment, he would not have paid particular attention to their tenor. She was mistaken; the Chancellor, Markoff, read them over quickly, as if a mere matter of form; but the king, who listened, became aware that certain articles were introduced which had not been previously agreed upon. By a fundamental law of Sweden, the queen of that country must necessarily profess the faith of the nation, and exchange the Greek for the Lutheran church; just as Catherine herself had formerly exchanged the Lutheran for the Greek persuasion, in obedience to the law of Russia. The empress, not from principle, but from pride and arbitrary power, was resolved that *her* imperial granddaughter should be made an exception to this law; and had introduced into the marriage treaty a clause to that purpose. The king expressed his disapprobation; and refused to sign the contract. The ministers of Catherine, thunderstruck by this resistance to the will of their despotic sovereign, under such circumstances, and on the part of a mere boy, knew not what course to take; they flattered, they entreated, they implored him only to sign the paper, and leave the matter to be arranged afterward, promising that his wishes should be acceded to in every thing. But Gustavus was immoveable; and enraged by the

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attempt to deceive him, he at length flung from them, repeating, "Non—je ne veux pas! Je ne le puis pas! Je ne signerai point!" and shut himself up in his own apartment. It was some time before any one dared to tell the empress of this unexpected *contretemps*; at length, her favourite, Zuboff, approached, and whispered to her. She made an effort to rise; but staggered, and the blood settled in her face. She had still power over herself; and her habitual dissimulation was never more needed. She uttered a few words, dismissing her court, under pretence that the King of Sweden was suddenly indisposed, and then retired to her cabinet.

Alexandrina, who was the real victim in this extraordinary affair, was led back to her apartment, where she fainted away, and afterward abandoned herself to grief.* With her a softer and more heartfelt sorrow mingled with deep mortification and wounded pride; but Catherine, the imperial, imperious Catherine—what were her sensations? Braved on her throne, insulted in her court, overreached in her policy, she could only sustain herself by the hope of vengeance. Pride and state etiquette forbade any expression of temper, but the effect on her frame was perhaps the more fatal. The King of Sweden took his departure a few days afterward,† and Catherine, who from that instant meditated his destruction, was preparing all the resources of her great empire for war—war on every side, when the death-stroke came, and she fell, like a sorceress suffocated among her own poisons. On the morning of the 9th of November, 1796, she was found stretched on the floor of her closet, struck by apoplexy. All attempts to reanimate her were in vain; and she expired the following day, without uttering

* Alexandrina was afterward married to the Archduke Joseph of Austria, brother to the present emperor. She fell into a decline, and died in 1801, at the age of nineteen.

† About the middle of September, 1796.

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a syllable, or giving the slightest indication of returning sense. She was in her sixty-seventh year, and had reigned thirty-four years.

This woman, whose political crimes have consigned her to universal execration, whose private vices cannot be contemplated without the deepest disgust and abhorrence, seems to have possessed all the blandishment and graces of an accomplished Frenchwoman. Under some points of view she presents herself to the fancy more like an ogress or a fury, grim, foul, and horrible, than any thing feminine or human; and yet in her personal deportment, and in the circle of her court, she was kind, easy, and good-humoured. Her serenity of temper and composure of manner were so remarkable, that the Prince de Ligne used to call her "*Votre Imperturbabilité*:" and the contrast between the simplicity and gayety of her deportment in private and the grandeur of her situation rendered her exceedingly fascinating. She possessed so many accomplishments; she was so elegant, playful, and dignified; she performed with such majesty and decorum all the external functions of royalty, that none approached her without respect and admiration; and, from the chivalrous De Ligne, the courtier, scholar, soldier, down to the vulgar, ferocious buffoon Suvarroff, she captivated the love and service of those who surrounded her. In her presence all were at ease with themselves and with her: she was a most kind and liberal mistress, and in the midst of her despotism displayed at times a degree of indulgence and magnanimity which appears almost unaccountable.* She never hesitated at any act of atrocity, cruelty, or injustice which could further her designs or secure her power: yet she could for-

* She used to say, "J'aime à recompenser tout haut, et à punir tout bas;" she occasionally flogged her maids of honour, but, it must be confessed, they deserved it from any hand but hers.

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give a personal affront, and seldom punished, even when most provoked.

She was handsome when young: her features were regular; her eyes were blue and penetrating, her brow expanded and expressive of intellect; but the lower part of her face was not pleasing; it was gross and heavy, and there was a sinister expression about the corners of her mouth, except when she smiled. Her countenance was impassible, and never betrayed what she felt or thought; her figure was rather below than above the middle size, but she carried her head so high, and moved with such peculiar grace and dignity, that it was difficult not to imagine her tall. Towards the end of her life, she wore a great quantity of paint, and was anxious to conceal the wrinkles with which time had furrowed her once clear and beautiful complexion.

She was always dressed with elegance as well as magnificence; and the Russian costume being more becoming to her person than the French fashion, she had the good taste to adopt it, and to adhere to it.

Catherine was succeeded by her son Paul: one of his first acts was to publish a *ukase*, which had been drawn up, and secreted, some years before the death of his mother, and which confined the future succession of the throne to the male heirs of his family. He also called in the paper money and debased coinage, by which the country had been overflowed in the time of the empress. Some other acts of good sense and humanity raised the hopes of his people, but they were quickly annihilated by his frantic tyranny. What Dr. Johnson would call "the flying vapours of incipient madness" settled into a terrible and hopeless insanity. If Paul had been a private individual, he would have been consigned to Bedlam and a strait waistcoat; but being an emperor and an emperor of Russia, it was found necessary to destroy him like a rabid animal; he was accordingly murdered in his chamber, with circumstances

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of peculiar barbarity, and was succeeded by his eldest son Alexander, in 1801.

The present Emperor or Russia, Nicholas I., is the grandson of Catherine. The Princess of Orange is her granddaughter: the Duchess of Oldenburgh, who visited England in 1815, and afterward became Queen of Wirtemburg, was another of the granddaughters of Catherine, and greatly resembled her grandmother in person, in talents, and in ambition.

THE END.

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